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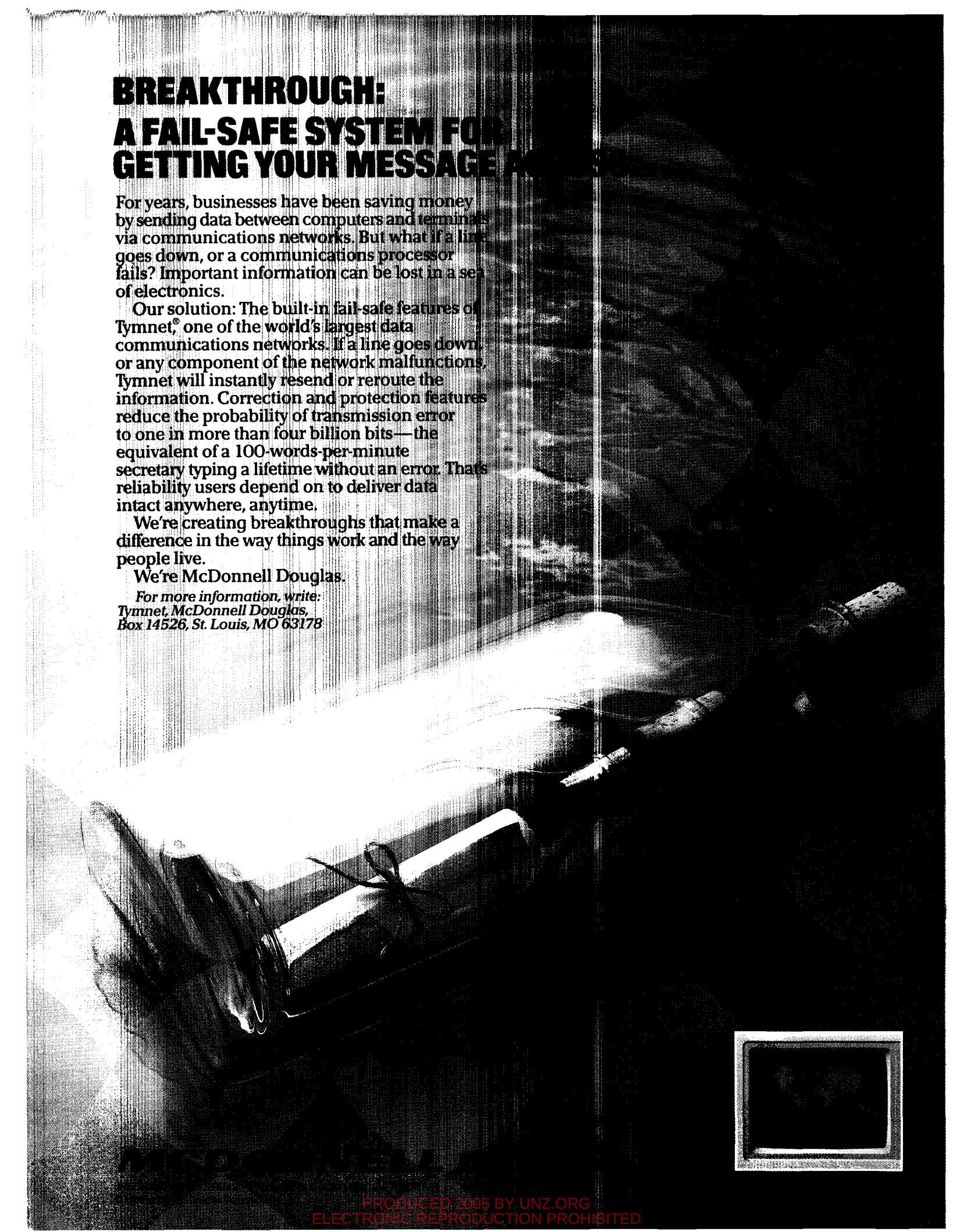

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John Ardagh

Life in the Other Germany

Faces & Façades in the East

SEVENTEEN MILLION GERMANS live under Moscow-inspired Communist rule in the *Deutsche Demokratische Republik* (DDR—or GDR, to use its English initials). Their lives are in many obvious ways very different from those of the 61 million inhabitants of the Federal Republic: yet they too are Germans, with the same language, culture and history, and many of the same traits and habits. Nearly four million have emigrated from the GDR to the West since the War; many others might still like to do so, if they were free to travel. But the vast majority have now come to terms with their destiny: they find that life under Socialism is quite livable and even has some advantages, though they still bitterly resent the travel ban.

I was not nearly as free as in the West to travel and to meet people. I applied to the GDR Embassy in London and was told that they did not at all like the idea of a book about both German States within one cover, as this was contrary to their basic policy. Could I not write two separate books? I explained that in publishing terms this was impossible. Finally my wife and I were granted permission to visit the GDR, under supervision. We were allotted a pleasant and helpful young guide, who showed us around and was present at interviews. But we also had time free to meet a large number of our own private contacts, unescorted, and we found them very ready to talk frankly, both on this visit and on another which we made informally to East Berlin.

JOHN ARDAGH, *a former staff correspondent of "The Times" in Paris, is a freelance writer on French and European subjects for the BBC, "The Times", "The Sunday Times", "The Guardian", and other newspapers. He is the author of many books on France, of which the best known is "France in the 1980s" (Secker & Warburg and Penguin Books, 1982). His devotion to "Europeanism" led him to a change of focus with his new book, "Germany and the Germans" (published on 16 April by Hamish Hamilton); it is based on ten months spent recently in the two Germanies and was researched with the collaboration of Katharina Schmitz (who is now his wife). The articles in this and the following issue of* ENCOUNTER *are excerpted from a section on East Germany.*

THE CENTRE OF EAST BERLIN is an odd mixture of ghost town and grandiose modern capital. The pre-War heart of the city, where imperial palaces, ministries, and great cultural monuments stood on either side of the broad Unter den Linden, was nearly all of it here in the east, and only a small part of it (including the *Reichstag*) lay in what is now the Western sector. The GDR authorities have restored or replaced a number of the main buildings destroyed in the War: but the area closest to the Wall has been left deliberately as a wasteland or semi-derelict jumble. So the first-time visitor arriving from West Berlin, by car at Checkpoint Charlie or by *S-Bahn* at the Friedrichstrasse station, receives the initial impression of a city more shabby and shattered, indeed sinister, than it really is. The sector round the Friedrichstrasse has now been tidied up a little for the GDR's celebrations of Berlin's 750th anniversary this year but much of it is still a patchwork of vacant lots and gloomy, blackened office buildings, some of them still bullet-holed or bomb-scarred.

A few hundred metres to the east, however, the picture changes radically. Where the Unter den Linden avenue sweeps up to the wide Marx-Engels-Platz, heart of the modern city, several of the old majestic buildings—including the State Opera House, the Pergamon Museum and the Protestant Cathedral—have been meticulously restored to their original form. Beside them several massive new edifices stand as symbols of the GDR's assertive ambitions as a modern state—notably the towering white rectangle of the Foreign Ministry, and the Palace of the Republic with its gleaming façade of bronze-coloured glass. This part of the city is grandiose, to say the least—severe-looking, but tidy. There are plenty of grey-uniformed police around, ready to shout at any visitor who jay-walks, and maybe fine him; and often there are soldiers too. The first time that I saw the steel-helmeted, goose-stepping changing-of-the-guard outside the "Memorial to the Victims of Fascism and Militarism",

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it evoked memories and gave a nasty frisson. How crassly tactless to present this sight to tourists on the Unter den Linden. The goose-step is still widely used in the GDR's Army, and it serves to symbolise the fact that militarism in this half of Germany did not die with Hitler in the bunker.

At the nearby Alexanderplatz the scene is more gentle. This vast modern piazza, enclosed by new department stores and skyscraper hotels, is now the main shopping and entertainment centre of East Berlin, and something of a showpiece too, pleasant and lively in its way, with music playing, a fountain splashing, and a curious "international clock" used as a meeting-place like Eros at Piccadilly Circus. The crowds seem to be relaxed and good-humoured, and are quite well dressed in a classless sort of way (some are in jeans, obtained no doubt from Western contacts). Hardly anyone looks chic apart from a few tourists. Close by is the 365-metre Television Tower, the city's most dominant landmark, with its globe-shaped revolving observation tower where East Berliners go to gaze wistfully at the lights of the forbidden Ku'damm. Eastwards from here stretches the long and pompous Karl-Marx-Allee: its giant blocks of workers' flats were built in the 1950s in Stalinist-brutalist style, and the street was then the Stalin-Allee. At least the sheer size of these buildings balances the great width of the street, giving it a Champs-Elysées-like scale It is not exactly ablaze with Parisian glitter: yet, as in other parts of the city, the buildings are often festooned with red bunting, flags and banners, and slogans in the genre of "SOCIALISM CARES FOR THE HAPPINESS OF THE PEOPLE" and "ACTIVELY WE SUPPORT THE PEACE POLICY OF THE BELOVED SOVIET UNION"—well at least they add a cheerful dash of colour to a town otherwise grey and drab in its façades, and bare of commercial advertising.

Go further out into the residential and industrial districts, and you find side-streets full of potholes and miles of sad, decaying houses, victims not of the bombing but of long neglect. But there are plenty of children's playgrounds, and barrack-like premises that house youth clubs, old people's day-care centres, and other manifestations of the all-enveloping welfare state. Everywhere, in this richest country of the Soviet bloc, patient queues are waiting at the doors of restaurants and outside butchers' and grocers' shops (for a generally dismal selection of meat and fresh vegetables). Inside the routine restaurants at lunchtime, people eat in subdued silence, hardly exchange a word—yet these are Berliners, famous in the past for being witty, chatty, and high-spirited, as in the West they still are. Admittedly, the ambience is somewhat livelier in the evenings.

WHEN WE LEFT Berlin to visit the rest of the GDR, we used the motorways where the BMWs and Audis of the West German tourists contrasted with the elderly and hideous little Wartburgs and Trabants of the local citizens. Everyone drives at a vigilant 100 kph maximum, for the police are quick to impose a fine if you go faster; and if you are found to have been drinking alcohol, even a small amount, the penalties are stiff. In the GDR, even more than in West Germany, rules are there to be obeyed.

The first provincial city we visited was Dresden. Once this was one of the loveliest cultural capitals of Central Europe: today, though largely rebuilt, it still has a stunned, walking-wounded feel, as though it had never properly recovered from what are officially described as "the terror-raids of the barbaric imperialists" (the Soviet Union's allies) in February 1945. The Zwinger and the other great baroque buildings have been patiently reassembled using the original stone: but, while some of this is still its former rich golden colour, other pieces are blackened from the bombing, and the piebald effect is not pretty. Semper's famous Opera House was finally reopened in 1985, after many years of carefully detailed restoration. The effect is lavish and prestigious, and the cost was enormous—but it seems a pity that a few marks were not spared for giving the rest of this drab city a fresh coat of paint too.

Leipzig, by contrast, wears a more prosperous and self-confident air: not only was it less badly bombed than Dresden, but today with its twice-yearly trade fair (the biggest in Eastern Europe), it is the GDR's commercial window on the world and thus enjoys quite a major international economic role. Its suburbs are stupendously ugly, a mixture of giant graceless utility blocks of flats and semi-derelict older streets; but the spacious central part of the city is pleasing. It has traffic-free piazzas and arcades with well-stocked shops, some of them quite smart, and the people look more cheerful than in East Berlin or Dresden. In the old squares and side-streets around the *Thomaskirche*, where J. S. Bach was organist, we found cosy little privately-run cafés and tea-rooms whispering the last enchantments of some pre-War Central European *Gemütlichkeit* and frequented by gentle-looking student couples and civilised elderly music-lovers. Displayed inside the church was an apt quotation from Luther, "A Christian is a free man in all things and no man's slave."

FROM LEIPZIG we drove to Weimar, where Goethe's residence and garden-house, and the park where he walked, have all been devotedly preserved, as have the houses associated with Schiller, Liszt, and Bach. The town gets its fill of tourists but it has not been commercially tarted up in the process as would happen in the West: it remains much as it probably was before the War, a quiet, slightly seedy little place with half-timbered houses, and its melancholy air goes well with its many poetic memories. The surrounding villages of the Thuringian and Saxon countryside also retain the feel of pre-War days: far fewer of their houses have been pulled down or modernised than in the Federal Republic, and one still sees horse-drawn carts, rough-looking peasants, and little churches patently in need of repair. Indeed, Westerners with long memories who visit the GDR will often make the observation that in many respects it has preserved the old pre-War flavour of Germany much more than the West has done. The tempo of life is slower, and modernism has made a less obvious impact; little shops and the styles of graphic design are more antiquated, the cars are smaller and less ubiquitous,

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and many streets are still cobbled. How far these are advantages is open to question. And there are other things that have changed less, too—old-style Prussian authoritarianism, for example, is more alive and well under Communism than it is in the *Bundesrepublik*.

One undoubted achievement of the GDR, dating from the 1960s, has been its economic progress. Capitalist West Germany, of course, is far wealthier: but the more valuable comparisons are to be made with the East. The GDR is economically and industrially much the strongest country in the Soviet bloc, with living standards an estimated 50% higher than in Russia, and by as early as 1970 it had become the world's tenth leading industrial power. This can be attributed above all to the innate German qualities of efficiency, thoroughness, technical flair, and so on.

The achievement appears especially remarkable when set in the context of the enormous handicaps that the country had to face at the outset, the heaviest of them being Soviet reparations. In contrast to the very light amount of dismantling carried out by the Allies in the West, and soon outweighed by Marshall Aid, the Soviet Union after 1945 set about exacting revenge on a massive scale. Its dismantling reduced East Germany's industrial capacity by an estimated 40-45%, equal to twice the damage done by the War. At first the Russians transported whole plants to their country, for reassembly there: but when they found this was not very efficient, they chose instead to expropriate the output of East German factories, without compensation, and this pillage amounted to an average of 25% of GNP between 1945 and 1953.

But then the Soviet Union changed its policy. Within the context of Comecon, the Eastern bloc's newly-created economic planning system, it decided to oblige each member state to specialise: and the GDR was allotted the role of supplying precision instruments, machine tools and other complex machinery, and some chemical products. Direct reparations were discontinued, but Comecon (i.e.—Moscow) set the prices for the GDR's goods. And this remains the position today. If less heavily than before, the GDR is still penalised; for the Soviet Union, its main trading partner, does not always provide a fair deal. The GDR depends on Russia for 80% of its oil and gas supplies, which it has to take at inflated prices; and in return the USSR pays poorly for GDR exports of machinery and other goods.

The GDR faced other economic handicaps too. It has few mineral resources of its own, apart from some lignite and potash. Moreover, in 1945 it inherited the least industrialised part of pre-War Germany, which in 1939 was producing only 7% of its steel and 2% of its hard coal. Much worse, the East Germans have had foisted on them the Soviet system of State centralised planning and bureaucratic management of nationalised concerns, and although they have coped with this a little more sensibly than, say, the Poles, or the Russians themselves, it has not always led to efficiency, to say the least. In early post-War years some 10,000 businesses were nationalised, including all those of any size in industry and commerce. Today some thousands of small private concerns are still permitted, mostly in crafts and the service sector, but they are marginal to the economy as a whole. The main factories have been regrouped into combines (*Kombinate*), each of which has its production levels, its prices, and its distribution outlets fixed for it in advance by various State planning bodies within the context of the overall Five- and Seven-Year Plans.

This kind of coordination and target-setting may bring some advantages (as in France): but the absence of a free market leads to various rigidities, bottle-necks, shortages, and sheer irrationalities. In 1963 matters were eased for a while when a much-heralded "New Economic System" was introduced, giving the combines a little more autonomy of decision-making, and putting more stress on managerial skills as opposed to bureaucratic control. This brought some results, and was certainly a factor behind the rapid economic progress of the mid-1960s. But in 1968 there was a move back towards recentralisation—partly in reaction against the "dangerous" liberal ideas coming from Dubček's Prague.

And so life has continued ever since, following a cyclical pattern common in the Soviet bloc, with moves first towards more autonomy and then back towards the centre. At least the East Germans have shown a little more realism and dynamism than most: hence their better performance. But they are still hamstrung, as one engineer confided to me in East Berlin: "If only we could manage things our own way, and if so many of our ablest people had not fled to the West, how brilliantly we could do!" Even as it is, the GDR's annual growth rate averaged 5% in the decade after 1963, and in the past 25 years its economic expansion has matched West Germany's—of course from a much lower starting-point.

Collectivised agriculture, like industry, has improved after a difficult start and is now considerably more efficient than in Russia or most other Soviet-bloc countries. Directly after the War, all holdings of more than 250 acres were confiscated without compensation from the wealthy land-owning *Junker* class, and most of this land was redistributed to farm workers, peasants and refugees. Massive collectivisation did not follow till a few years later, and at first its results were disastrous, for many farmers were naturally opposed to it, and the Party bureaucrats installed to run the new cooperatives had little idea of farming realities. Many of the most competent farmers left for the West.

Gradually, however, things have settled down, and today 95% of the land is farmed by cooperatives, numbering 82% of all farmers. This is large-scale industrial farming, well mechanised. It is less productive than on farms of similar size in the West: but in strictly economic terms it compares well with the small-scale family farming so common in the Federal Republic. According to Bonn sources, wheat yields per acre are only about 15% lower in the GDR. Above all, the Party collectivisers were sensible enough to allow members of cooperatives to retain private ownership of enough livestock and farmland (1.2 acres) to meet their own needs, and farmers have thus come grudgingly to accept the new scheme of things. This is a good example of the way the régime tries to balance the requirements of socialism and of individual privacy.

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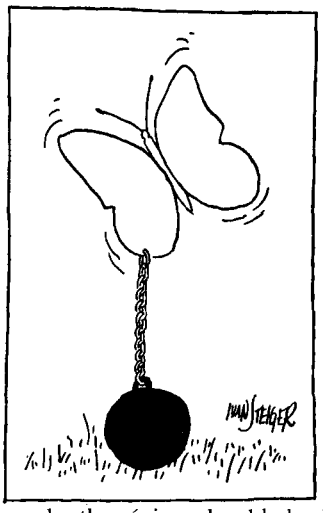

"THIS SOCIETY MAY BE far from perfect: but at least we have eliminated real poverty, and that is more than you have done in the West." I was chatting to an idealistic Communist of the old school, a childhood friend of friends of mine in Munich, as we sat in her three-room East Berlin flat for which she pays a mere 60 marks[1] rent a month. How far was her claim justified? The lives of GDR citizens may in many respects be unpleasantly restricted and supervised: but maybe the régime should also be given credit for a number of positive achievements, social as well as economic. It has at least partly fulfilled its ideal of creating an effective and generous welfare state. It has ironed out major inequalities of class and income, and it provides security and a reasonable standard of living for all those who toe the line and do not dissent too openly.

The eradication of the worst aspects of poverty has been achieved partly by a system of full employment, and partly through a strategy of massive subsidies for many of the basic necessities of life, which are thus very cheap indeed and in many cases have not risen in price for over twenty years. The régime is proud of this policy, which in certain obvious respects is admirable. Rents, unchanged since the 1960s, account for only 4-5% of an average family's income, with fuel bills adding another 1½-2%. A tram or *S-Bahn* ticket in East Berlin costs 20 pfennig for a journey of any length, the same as in the 1940s. Theatres and concerts too are remarkably cheap, and so are most restaurants: you can get an adequate meal for 6 to 8 marks.

Much basic food, including bread, milk and *Wurst*, is also pegged low in price—but here the government, to save itself money, has been quietly cheating by surreptitiously transferring some categories of food from the cut-price to the non-subsidised ranges. Thus a basic *Wurst* remains very cheap but is none too edible: if you want a good *Wurst*, you must pay maybe four or five times the price and probably go to a special quality shop. The artificial gulf between the "luxury" and "basic" ranges is enormous: at a bar in a theatre, we paid 4.80 marks for a glass of *Sekt* and 40 pfg for some horrid GDR Cola, whereas in the West the differential would have been more like two to one.[2] The system is also controversial in economic terms. It is reckoned that some 40% of the State budget goes on these subsidies, which cover some 80% of consumer products and utilities. Certainly this helps to banish poverty, for anyone on a basic income can live tolerably. But many of the GDR's less dogmatic thinkers will suggest in private that the system distorts the economy and impedes its modernisation. Yet politically it would be hard to change.

In line with this assault on poverty, the GDR has also sought to narrow the gulf in incomes and life-styles. Of course senior Party officials and their families enjoy many perks and privileges: but it would seem that they do not form a wealthy élite, a new upper class, to nearly the same extent as in the Soviet Union; and if they live secluded in a special residential zone in East Berlin, this is essentially for security and political reasons. In the ordinary ranks of society, wage differentials are modest. The average worker will earn 800 to 1,000 Marks a month, but an engineer or teacher may well receive no more than 1,100 to 1,500, while a factory manager or senior professional man might rise to 2,000 or so. Apart from a few top Party figures, the most affluent people in society tend to be found among the independent craftsmen, artisans, shopkeepers, or successful artists and performers; but even their prosperity is modest by Western standards.

Under the Constitution every citizen has the duty as well as the right to work—in practice the régime does ensure virtually full employment. Again, this is a source of official pride, mixed with scorn for the West. So how is it achieved? Numbers at university and technical colleges are fixed according to the needs of the economy and society, so that a student on entry is more or less assured of a job at the end of his studies, and similarly school leavers know they will be given apprenticeships or other positions. In earlier days there was much forced direction of labour, but today it is generally possible to choose one's career or type of job, at least at the outset; it may be hard to change later. Factories, offices, and other bodies each have their quota of staff fixed by the various national plans, and they cannot easily make dismissals: in practice, in most firms there is over-manning by about 30-40% compared with the West. In addition, many people are obliged to work below their qualifications. So this is how full employment is achieved: by the disguising of under-employment, or by mis-employment.

MEANWHILE, somewhat paradoxically, it remains official policy to encourage mothers with young families to take a job as well, in the interests of boosting the economy, and the State helps them through a generous provision of crèches and kindergartens. According to government sources, 87% of women of working age have a job outside the home—and, as wages are not high, most young couples are glad of this second income. Though women are as rare in senior political posts as in West Germany, they account for nearly half the lay judges and well over half the nation's teachers. Yet, at the same time the régime provides unusually strong incentives for young people to get married and breed several children. Newly-weds under 26 can obtain an interest-free 5,000-mark loan for furnishing their homes, and its repayment is progressively waived as children are born.

Family allowances become very generous for couples with

[1] A GDR mark, at the official rate, equals exactly 1 Deutschmark, at a rate that is solidly fixed. On the black market, the DM can fetch up to four GDR marks.

[2] Some other goods regarded as luxuries are also made artificially expensive: coffee, chocolate, and TV sets all cost three to four times as much as in the West.

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three children or more. A young mother in a job can get six months' maternity leave on full pay for a first child, and a full year's paid leave at home for each subsequent one. And large families have the highest priority on the long waiting lists for flats. So the régime is simultaneously keeping up a large female work-force and urging its citizens to help increase the population—and this dual policy has achieved some success. The birth-rate was falling gently until 1973, but unlike that of West Germany it has since been rising, and today the annual number of births almost equals the tally of deaths plus emigration, so the population level is more or less static. This is all the more remarkable in that since 1972 both abortion and the pill have been freely available on demand for all women over 16.

But a great deal is expected of GDR women and they feel the strain of it: it is not so easy to combine a full-time job and a young family, in a cramped flat, especially since shopping requires endless patient queueing, and German husbands under socialism seem as reluctant to help with the chores as their capitalist counterparts. All this, and the fact that most couples marry very young, goes a long way to explain the very high divorce rate, which ends two marriages out of three—twice the West German figure.

THE HEALTH SERVICES and hospitals, though sometimes short of modern equipment, are generally efficient and considerate. Yet the GDR's prized welfare state does contain some notable inadequacies. Elderly and retired people are well cared for in a human sense, partly through a network of "People's solidarity" centres where schoolchildren and others are encouraged to come and help look after the old. But pensions remain quite low: though recently improved, they still account for barely half an average worker's income, a ratio that is better than Britain's but well below that of West Germany. (Is it that old people are judged less useful for the nation's future than working mothers?) Housing, too, is generally of poor quality. In the 1950s the GDR was so busy trying to strengthen its industrial base that it neglected to create new homes to make good the damage of the War, and its building rate *per capita* in that decade was only one-fifth of West Germany's. In the 1960s, when consumer matters ceased to be such a low priority, the housing programme was speeded up, but in terms of quantity more than quality. In 1971, only 11% of homes had central heating and only 39% had bath or shower; these figures have since risen to 30 and 70% today.

THE AUTHORITIES are at last modernising and redecorating thousands of houses a year: but it will still take them decades to make up for the long period of neglect. This was due not only to shortages of labour, and of paint and other materials, but to an official view that neatness and elegance were decadent bourgeois qualities. This has affected public buildings of all kinds, as much as housing. Official attitudes may have changed a little: but for the moment the average street in the GDR still wears a grey, gloomy, tumbledown look, and undoubtedly this must have a psychological impact—as one well-known novelist in East Berlin suggested to me:

> "People have grown so used to the drabness that I really doubt they notice it any more. But it's one reason why they are not more cheerful. If only there were a bit more fresh paint in the GDR, and a bit more fun and fantasy too. I'm sure that fewer people would want to emigrate. This is just beginning to dawn on my friends in the Party. . . ."

Housing is still in short supply. It is allocated mostly by local councils, and newly-weds have to wait two years on average to get a flat of their own, while a childless couple may have to remain content with one room. The shortage can even make it harder to move to another job.

EDUCATION, BY CONTRAST, has never been stinted to the same degree, for the régime sees this as a crucial investment both for the economy and for political stability; there are more teachers per head than in West Germany, and a larger share of GNP is spent on schooling. The State assumes a kind of para-parental role, as it seeks from their earliest years to "win the hearts and minds" of its young citizens; and it permits no private schools, Church or other. Children in their crèches and kindergartens are taught to get used to collective living and are primed in the elements of social obligation, patriotism and "the anti-fascist struggle". Then from six to sixteen all attend the same kind of ten-year comprehensive "polytechnic-schools", where history and literature are taught the Marxist-Leninist way; everyone learns Russian, while later on English or French are often added. But the main emphasis is on mathematics and science, which in senior class can account for sixteen hours a week.

The vocational element in schooling is very strong, and it shows itself in the most distinctive feature of the GDR system—in the special link with factory work. Each school is "adopted" by a nearby factory or farm cooperative, and here from the age of thirteen all classes go to spend a full day once a fortnight, where they receive instruction and do some practical work. The aim of the scheme, as one teacher suggested to me, is to "bring the classroom closer to real life" and to make for an easier transition later from school to working life; also, to reduce some of the bias against manual labour that can still exist even under Socialism. This well-intentioned system has its critics, for some managers complain that the children are a nuisance, and some teenagers look on the experience as a waste of time since they cannot choose their factory. But on the whole it works well; and the GDR philosophy is that all young people, however intellectual their later careers are to be, should acquire some basic technical skill. Thus I met a young historian who before university had learned to repair tractors, and a TV producer who was also a typesetter. There seems a lot to be said for this.

The majority of pupils leave school at fifteen or sixteen and then go straight into jobs or into an apprenticeship system

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that is not so different from West Germany's. Each firm is obliged to take a certain number of recruits, so jobs are assured for all. Some young people go on to help other students or excel in Party or youth movement activities. In other words, under their teachers' supervision these young people are set to watch and assess each other, in a manner that certainly militates against non-conformity.

The process begins at a much earlier age, in school, where children are taught "social responsibility" under a system described to me as "total education—*Erziehung* as well as *Bildung* [general upbringing as well as academic nurturing]". One of the more attractive features of the GDR school system is that it provides plenty of scope for hobbies, crafts, sport, culture, debating, and other extra-class activities—in this respect it is closer to the British than to the West German model. Whereas most West German children leave school at 1 p.m. and do not return, GDR children—seldom left to their own devices—stay on during the afternoon for these supervised pursuits. Mostly these take place within the framework of the Pioneer organisation, which is the junior branch of the ubiquitous *Freie Deutsche Jugend* (*FDJ*), the "Free German Youth" movement.

MEMBERSHIP of the Pioneers is voluntary: but to opt out is not so easy, and in practice in the six-to-fourteen age-group some 90% of children belong. At fourteen they move on to join the *FDJ* itself, and they also attend preparatory classes for the *Jugendweihe* ("youth consecration"), an initiation ceremony devised to replace Christian confirmation: here they must affirm in public that they have "grown up in the Socialist faith". The *Jugendweihe* likewise is not compulsory, but very few youngsters refuse it. In the fourteen-to-thirty age-group some 77% belong to the *FDJ*, and their smart red-and-navy-blue uniforms are much in evidence at political rallies and other public meetings. The *FDJ* has delegates in Parliament, and branches in villages and factories, and in the upper forms of schools and in universities, where its members organise discos and carnivals and hold regular political discussions. In summer Pioneers and *FDJ*-ists go to holiday camps where they sing Socialist songs lustily. It is rather like Scouts and Guides but more political, and the indoctrination role is manifest. The Pioneers and the *FDJ* belong to the ruling Socialist Unity Party (*SED*) which permits neither the other "token" parties nor the Churches to have youth organisations of their own.

Many GDR school buildings are still drab: but at Erfurt I was taken to visit one model comprehensive that I found neat, airy and spacious, comparing well with similar schools in the West. The atmosphere seemed humane and caring, not too regimented. There was some propaganda on the classroom walls, of the anti-NATO and anti-Reagan type: but it was not too strident, and one room displayed a portrait of Luther. Some senior pupils in their *FDJ* uniforms were presented for me to interview. One very bright fifteen-year-old daughter of a policeman declared proudly that her aim in life was "to identify with the State and serve its interests", and she planned to study law: when I asked her what she thought of the Western multi-party system with its alternating governments, she seemed not to understand what I meant. Others denounced "the class struggle" in the West, and told me how they spent part of their spare time caring for elderly and sick people. Clearly the *FDJ* and the Pioneers do provide an outlet for the idealism and sense of social service of many young people. Or, as one veteran West German reporter in East Berlin suggested to me:

> "The Party survives in power not only with the help of Russian guns, but because it still gets enough genuine support from a young idealistic minority in each new generation that emerges."

SPORT, that crucial GDR speciality, is also exploited as a focus for national idealism, and alike in schools and universities it is compulsory. What is more, the GDR's 180,000 sports instructors are systematically on the look-out for young children with athletic promise, who from the age of thirteen, and sometimes from as early as seven or eight, will be transferred from ordinary classes to one of twenty special sport schools, to be trained as future champions. It was Ulbricht who initiated this policy of using sport as an instrument for winning international recognition and for boosting domestic morale and patriotism. Hence the huge effort deployed: the State spends an estimated 2% of GNP on athletics. And this has paid off: around the globe, the GDR is better known for its sporting achievements than for anything else.

The nation's star athletes receive many special privileges, including large apartments, Trabant cars (without having to wait the usual eight years for them), and free seaside holidays in Cuba. This cosseting tends to reinforce Western criticisms that the GDR's sports policy seems to be geared more towards producing champions than providing recreational facilities for a wider public. There may be some truth in this: but mass activity is certainly encouraged too. Some four million citizens hold the GDR Sports Badge, an award for sporting skills and physical fitness whose motto is, "*Ready for Work and the Defence of our Homeland*". Popular attention focuses also on the Spartakliad youth games and sports festival held every other year at Leipzig, a mammoth event with over 70,000 participants. In general, the régime does seem to have succeeded in imbuing its people with a widespread enthusiasm for sport and a veneration for its top athletes. After all, in this enclosed little country, they do not have so many other outlets for their passions.

NOT ONLY when they are pupils and students, but throughout the rest of their lives too, the régime strives to inculcate in its citizens a *sozialistisches Staatsbewusstsein*, or sense of identification with the Socialist State, and it does this through a whole range of collectivist activities. Its motives are undoubtedly mixed. Some of the more idealistic Communists, mainly older ones, are still genuinely committed to developing a warm and brotherly community where everyone can feel secure and wanted: on the other hand, many zealots and functionaries are much more concerned with channelling

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people's energies and trying to ensure their loyalty, so that the Party can retain a firmer grip on power. Some leaders, no doubt including Honecker himself, are to some degree guided by both objectives at once.

Witness above all the way that factories and other work-places are given a far wider and more assertive role in people's daily lives than in the West, extending to welfare services, group social activity and political matters. The *SED*, as well as the *FDJ* and other Party-run bodies, are very much present in the work-places, where they hold propagandist rallies and meetings for the staff:

> "And if you are in a position of any responsibility [I was told by a doctor who had just emigrated illegally to the West] it is not so easy to avoid having to stand up and make public declarations, praising the gallant struggle of the workers, vowing friendship with our Soviet brothers, extolling Party resolutions, or other such Marxist crap. In the hospital where I worked, some people did this sincerely and most others followed suit out of sheer opportunism. I couldn't bear the shamming any longer—one reason why I left."

All citizens must belong to a "brigade" or "collective" attached to the place where they live or work, and since the mid-1960s "collectives of socialist labour" have been encouraged to develop in factories and offices.

WORKER DELEGATES in factories sit on "production councils" whose job is to advise management in its decisions. But the plant's director and the State bureaucrats above him always have the last word; and this GDR version of *Mitbestimmung* would seem in practice to have even less influence on policy than the West German kind. So workers tend to feel apathetic about the factory and alienated from the remote men of power at the top—as even some official GDR studies will admit: according to one report made secretly for the Party leadership but then leaked, three-quarters of young workers at the Robotron plant in Dresden felt that they had no say in its affairs, and over 60% said they were afraid to voice any criticism. However, the social and welfare roles of factories and offices bring them much more popularity with their staff. This is far more pronounced than in the West: workers will expect their factories to help them find a flat, to run holiday camps for them, and to provide kindergartens. The trade unions play a big part here. They are denied the right to strike, nor do they conduct wage bargaining; instead, they are in charge of all social security funds, they administer the firm's holiday centres and hospitals, and they spend money on kindergartens, sport, and leisure. They are the management's welfare agency, not its adversary.

Another curious example of the "all-embracing" role of the work-place concerns the handling of minor acts of delinquency and petty offences. These are not referred to outside courts but are dealt with inside the factory by "conflict commissions" made up of elected employees. To quote an instance I was given at one plant, a lorry-driver might be hauled up before his colleagues for stealing vodka from the canteen for a private party. Generally, if found guilty, the offender has to apologise in public, repair the damage done, and maybe pay a small fine. Some 40% of penal cases are handled in this way; other more serious ones, that might involve a prison sentence, are sent to a normal court.

As far as I could tell, these conflict commissions work quite well in their way, though some people do treat them somewhat cynically. They are just one example of the earnest, school-like, moralistic atmosphere that pervades so much of public and working life in the GDR, alike in factories and offices, hospitals and farm cooperatives, State shops and colleges, even newspapers and TV studios. All are run in much the same way. And, except amid the privacy of his family and trusted circle of friends, the individual cannot easily escape the State's nanny-like determination to keep him on the strait and narrow path.

POPULAR ATTITUDES to the régime are of course impossible to quantify: but it is usually estimated that about 15-20% of people are sincere supporters (that is, about the same number as the two million or so members of the *SED*).

They include, first, a sizeable section of the older working class, the ones who have perhaps benefited most from socialism. Next come the battalions of small Party officials, local bureaucrats, and *apparatchiks*—some of them sincere, more of them opportunists who enjoy their perks and petty power.

> "Because I'm a Party member [said a civic employee in Rostock with ingenuous candour] I was able to get special construction materials, normally so scarce, for building myself this nice little house. This is a lovely society, and I live well."

Third come the idealists, not so numerous—some of them young, like my policeman's daughter, but more of them found among the old guard who fought for their faith during the hard Nazi years and then helped to create the régime. Like, for example, the elderly middle-class Jewish lady I know in East Berlin, who after the War returned to the city from her London exile:

> "Maybe we're going too slowly, but at least we're on the right lines, and there's more true social justice than in the West. In London, when I went back this year, people were saying of the good times, 'Not any more'; here they say, 'Not yet'."

But she went on to reflect with a touch of sadness that her East Berlin friends and neighbours seemed to have lost much of the caring community spirit of the old hard days—"They've grown too selfish and consumerist; they think it a disaster if they can't get their deep-freeze quickly."

So much for the supporters. Of the other 80% or so, just a few are true dissidents who hate the régime and try to find ways of emigrating (many have done so). The rest, the vast majority, simply acquiesce and try as best they can to enjoy their own private lives.

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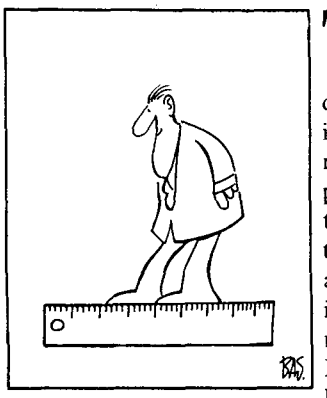
Quiet Lives



THE INITIALS "DDR" stand for "*Der doofe Rest*" (the dopey dregs), runs an old and familiar joke. Certainly it was the more bright and resourceful people who tended to leave for the West, in the days when they still could; and the less ambitious who stayed, at least in the middle classes. So, far more than Poland or even Hungary, the GDR has been bereft of its enterprising élites —and this makes it a duller place though maybe also, from the régime's point of view, a more easily controllable one. Those left behind after the building of the Wall, at first despondent, have since developed a certain resignation: they have come to terms with a situation they cannot change and have learned to make the most of it. They have found, too, that life has become more tolerable in the past twenty years or so. Living standards have risen and consumer goods become more plentiful, while surveillance by the secret police has lightened. Honecker in effect has reached an unspoken agreement with his people, whereby he allows them some privacy and a decent living, so long as they do not cause him trouble. "So why should we rock the boat?" is a familiar reaction. "Let's keep our heads down and settle for a quiet and modestly comfortable life."

Or as I was told by Günter Kunert, the well-known dissident poet from the GDR now living near Hamburg:

> "The régime treats people exactly like domestic pets—protected, but not free. But you can't be miserable *all* the time: human happiness keeps breaking through."

People have come to identify with the GDR and to see it as their home, and especially this is so now that a whole new generation has grown up that never knew the days before the Wall. Many people have even come to be vaguely proud of the GDR, and they resent being patronised by affluent visitors from West Germany who tell them how unfortunate they are. Such people are proud of their country's sporting successes, of its economic progress in face of such odds, and of cultural achievements such as the restoration of old towns. Some of them, without necessarily liking the régime, will even take some pride in the GDR as a society less violent, permissive, and over-competitive than the West, and one that has better preserved some of the old German values.

These values are essentially private ones: and if they have been retained, it is less by virtue of the régime than in defence against it. To compensate as best they can for the irksome official pressures, the boring collectivism and the generally grey surface of life, most GDR inhabitants retreat into private pleasures, and the gentleness and trust of their circle of family and close friends. Almost everyone I met who knew both Germanies well remarked to me that, wherever this trust exists, human relations tend to be closer, warmer, and more genuinely caring in the GDR than in the Federal Republic where families are more geographically dispersed and so many people are in part corrupted by careerism, consumerism, insecurity, and so on. In the GDR, because officialdom is not to be trusted and you never know whether your neighbour might not be an informer, people who are close to each other depend on each other emotionally much more; because daily life with its queues and shortages is not so easy, they rely much more on close friends and relatives for practical help; and because the pace of life is less hectic, they have more time for each other and are readier to look after sick or elderly dependents. One emigrant I met in Hamburg said:

> "Now that she's retired, my widowed mother would be able to come and live with me here, but I've dissuaded her. She'd never adapt to the solitude—and I have a full-time job."

In the GDR people may be bored, but they are less often lonely.

However, if a mildly oppressive Communist State has served for the wrong reasons to make people nicer, this hardly serves to justify that régime. The supreme irony is that the warm human community advocated by Socialism is now being created *against* Socialism, within the cell-like private circles.

The people I met privately within the GDR, or recently emigrated from it, struck me as noticeably less worldly and sophisticated than West Germans, more gentle and natural, but more subdued too, with a curiously tentative manner. People do not chat very readily in public, and they queue silently. In one crowded East Berlin cafeteria where I lunched, you could have heard a pin drop, whereas in the West those same clerks and typists would have been laughing and gossiping. And when couples meet for the first time in the home of mutual friends, initially they seem wary of talking to each other. This appears to be more than simply an instilled fear of possible informers or other enemies, in a society where anything you say might be held against you years later. It may also be a deeper kind of cowed spiritlessness after so many years of being told what not to say. (One joke that circulates is about an East German dog meeting a Polish dog on the frontier, each on his way to the other's country. "But why on earth are you going to the GDR?" "Well, I simply must eat. And you, why go to Poland?" "I simply must bark.")

MOST PEOPLE try to live inconspicuously. Günter Gaus, the distinguished Hamburg-based liberal journalist who knows the GDR well, having served from 1974-81 as first head of the West German Mission in East Berlin, has written a book describing it as a "*Nischengesellschaft*", or society of little niches.

> "It's a police state, yes, but not an arbitrary one and that's an important distinction. The rules are clear, and so long as you stick to them, nothing awful will happen to you. So, apart from the tragedy of the dissidents, anyone can live quite privately in his little niche without being disturbed.

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The State has a tacit arrangement to that effect with the citizens."

Another well-known West German journalist, Robert Röntgen (till recently correspondent in East Berlin of the *ARD* network), described it to me as:

> "not only a niche society but a group society. Many people form themselves into exclusive little groups of some 20 to 30, where they stick together for discussion and friendship, and above all for mutual help in coping with officialdom, material shortages, and so on. The groups therefore tend to be multi-professional, so as to maximise skills and contacts: I know one that includes an actress, a doctor, and a factory technician. People depend on such friends much more than they would in the West. The groups are non-political and not actively dissident: but the régime does not like them much, since they tend to shift the focus of loyalty away from State collectivism. There is quite a lot of petty corruption in the GDR, and officials often need to be bribed before they will help you. But, within a group, people *never* cheat each other."

It is noticeable too that professional people tend to be much less career-minded than in the West. The State may try to woo workers to greater efforts: but, as it also offers job security, most employees feel little incentive to work hard and will prefer to conserve their energies for their leisure or for moonlighting, which is widespread. As wage differentials are small, it is often thought hardly worthwhile to strive to get a better job that will involve more work and responsibility for little extra pay: apart from a number of *SED* loyalists, the only people who work really hard in the GDR are the few thousands in the private sector—and a free-lance window-cleaner can earn more money than many an engineer.

To climb a hierarchy inside a firm, you must show yourself to be a devotee of the régime or at least pay lip-service: plenty are prepared to do this, but they tend to be looked on as opportunists and they may lose their real friends. So, in this non-competitive, non-risk-taking society, a great many people prefer to settle for a junior position and a quiet life. On the other hand, to opt out completely and live on your wits, as some younger ones might be tempted to do, is not at all easy. As basic necessities are so cheap, it would in theory be quite possible to get by on a very low income as an independent artisan, for example making pottery or even writing stories; but for this you need a permit and a tax number, which are not always given. If you are unable to show them, you can be arrested and prosecuted.

ONE NOTABLE FEATURE of the "niche society" is that more and more people are building their own little villas or bungalow homes, on plots of land on the edge of towns. This may be a bid to circumvent the housing shortage, or to escape the semi-collective life of blocks of flats, or to pursue the hobby of gardening, or all of these at once. What is especially significant is that the State since 1971 has encouraged this trend, and increasingly so. It leases the land without charge, and it provides access to building materials and loans for families prepared to follow one of the various types of house-design laid down by the Construction Ministry. Those who take advantage of the scheme usually build these simple little homes themselves, with the help of friends: any weekend in the suburbs you can see these amateurs busily hammering and mortaring. Some 20% of new dwellings fall into this category.

Why does the State encourage this kind of private ownership? Firstly, of course, to help it deal with the housing shortage. But there is another and more important reason that lies right at the heart of the astonishing contradiction today in the régime's collectivist-versus-privacy attitudes. It still pursues its collectivist policies, through the youth movements, the factory brigades and so on. But it has come to accept that these alone cannot satisfy people or make them happy, and that it must find other ways of answering their consumerist urges and desires for a private life. This trend, barely noticeable under Ulbricht, has become much more pronounced under Honecker in the past decade or so. And so the régime promotes owner-occupation of homes as a means of securing a more stable and contented society, one with a stake in the status quo and thus not so likely to be tempted into Polish-style unrest.

This point was put to me forcibly by a number of GDR citizens, including one prominent Communist writer, critical of the régime but not hostile to it:

> "Though it will never dare to say so, this deeply conservative government wants the population to be conservative too. And so it is in the process of creating just the kind of selfish consumerist petit-bourgeois society that decent Socialists are supposed to hate. Party leaders I meet are quite aware of these dangers, but it's impossible to discuss them in public."

The dilemma is not new. In 1975 the "reformist" Marxist Robert Havemann wrote an article, published in Hamburg, in which he complained that the GDR was entering into artificial competition with the West for all the wrong materialistic things: instead of liberalising towards more true democracy and political freedom under Socialism, it was simply selling out to consumerism. For uttering this and other home truths, Havemann was put under house arrest.

Church & State

THE POLICY OF relaxing the reins in private matters (while keeping tight overall control) has been applied especially to religion and to watching West German television—two vitally important areas of life in the GDR. Until the early 1970s, to view Western TV was not allowed: many people surreptitiously did so, but they risked being punished and sometimes were. In those days, *FDJ* activists would climb on rooftops to remove westward-turned aerials, and the authorities would try to keep a check on the

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guilty ones. One trick they used was for teachers to get classes of young children to "draw a sketch of the TV logo": so the innocent tots drew the one they knew best, and their poor parents were hauled up for questioning.

Since 1973 all this has changed and the crime is now sanctioned. This was the fruit of *détente* with West Germany after *Ostpolitik*, and of the new milder Honecker line. Since it was never technically possible to jam Western TV, and many Party leaders themselves watched it, the hypocrisy of the situation could not have lasted for ever. Today, in the territory reached by West German transmitters, some 95% of GDR citizens view it regularly, including Honecker and the Politburo. People sometimes tune in to films, sport and entertainment, but not so very often because GDR television itself provides quite good programmes; mainly they watch the news and current affairs documentaries, where the GDR's own coverage is predictably biased, limited and boring. Hence East Germans tend to be very well informed about the world, even though Western newspapers and magazines remain banned. Television is their link with outside reality. Nor is the régime really so displeased with this mass viewing, for so many Western programmes nowadays are filled with news of unemployment, crime, *Angst*, youth demonstrations, and so on, and it feels that this TV fare may well make its own people more content with their lot and less keen to emigrate. Also it knows well that the ability to watch Western TV assuages the claustrophobia created by travel restrictions. People can at least enjoy the West vicariously.

It has been noted that applications to emigrate have been consistently much the highest in the Dresden area, which for reasons of terrain is the main part of the GDR unable to pick up West German stations. Either this made the people there feel more trapped, isolated and dissatisfied, or else they alone were not sharing the nightly spectacle of the West's miseries, or maybe a bit of both. Anyway, in 1985 the GDR government actually began installing special cables to relay the West German networks to Dresden.

THE STATE has also greatly improved its relations with the Protestant Church, which today enjoys a more privileged position than any other Church in Communist Europe, including the Catholic Church in Poland: "Workers of the world, for God's sake unite!" was the satiric comment of one East Berlin cabaret sketch. Honecker's régime has come to accept that it needs the cooperation of this influential Church, which still has some 7.7 million registered members, almost half the population. Its attendance figures have been declining, as in the West, and today only 7% of East Berliners are regular churchgoers: but this is no true measure of its real support, in a country where the Churches offer the only organised public alternative to the official value-system, and thus attract many people who might not otherwise be very religious. The Catholic Church in this part of Germany, with its firm Lutheran tradition, has always been much weaker than Protestantism, and has 1.2 million members. It keeps a low profile and has been more wary than the Protestants of reaching an active accommodation with the State.

After the War, the anti-Nazi resistance record of many Protestant leaders, as well as their social and egalitarian ideals, won them a certain respect from the new Communist rulers, some of whom had even shared prison cells and concentration camps with them. This may explain why the Church was not victimised as severely as in some East European countries at that time. Even so, throughout the 1950s and '60s there was a good deal of harassment, as the State fought to restrict a rival ideology and reduce its hold on youth. A few priests were jailed; church literature was burned; student Christian groups were outlawed from universities and young churchgoers were seldom permitted to take the *Abitur*. During this time, when the GDR was struggling to establish its separate identity, the régime was above all angered by the fact that the Evangelical Churches of East and West Germany remained closely united within a single body, the *Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland*, and it tended to see the GDR Churches as agents of the West. These tensions even increased after the building of the Wall.

After the split in 1969, and especially after Honecker succeeded Ulbricht in 1971, the régime steadily modified its hostility. In 1976 the *SED* pronounced formal guarantees of freedom of religion and belief. And in March 1978 Honecker held talks with Bishop Schönherr, head of the Lutheran Church in the GDR—the first such meeting between leaders of State and Church for 30 years—at which a *modus vivendi* was established, with the régime offering various concessions and privileges to the Church, and promising to allow Christians the same respect and rights as other citizens, in return for a Church commitment not to meddle in politics. Honecker probably had various motives in making the deal. He wanted to improve the GDR's image abroad; he saw that the Church could be of practical value to the State through its welfare work with the sick and handicapped; and above all, at a time of restiveness and disillusion among young people, he hoped that the Church might be prepared to act as a moderating force by helping to channel and tame the dissidence and promote stability. And the Church, with some misgivings, has tacitly accepted this role.

The *quid pro quo* is that the Church accepts the State and does not fight against it: this still causes heartache among some priests, but most of the more virulently anti-Communist have by now left for the West. Each side today knows and respects its limits. As one open-minded pastor in East Berlin put it to me:

> "I don't think old Honecker is entirely atheistic; he considers it normal and right that each village should have its little church. He admires our anti-Nazi record too. And, for our part, Lutherans in Germany have a long tradition of acceptance of the established political order—for good or ill."

A tradition, you would have thought, that the wiser of them would have learned to forget since the Nazi period.

THE MOST EXTRAORDINARY EPISODE in the régime's bid to move closer to the Church came in 1983, the year of the 500th

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anniversary of the birth of Martin Luther in the little town of Eisleben, west of Leipzig. It so happens that nearly all the main events in the life of the great reformer took place on what is now GDR territory. He was born and died at Eisleben, he studied and was a monk at Erfurt, he translated the New Testament into German in Wartburg castle, and he is believed to have nailed his 95 famous theses to the door of Wittenberg church. But in the first decades after the War the GDR officially regarded Luther as "an enemy of the people and traitor to the peasants", and as late as the mid-1970s school history-books were still teaching this version.

Then all began to change. Luther now became "a precursor of Marx, as John the Baptist was of Christ" and "the man who mobilised the progressive forces in Germany against the Papal exploiters". So the history books were finally re-written, to the confusion of many loyal Marxist teachers. It soon became clear that the turnabout was partly by way of preparation for the anniversary, when the State staged giant celebrations that matched those of the Church itself and led some foreign critics to pour scorn on this "ungainly effort to appropriate Luther as an ideological forebear of German Communism". Honecker himself chaired the organising committee, State television gave live coverage of the opening ceremony at Wartburg, and the Opera House in East Berlin was lent to the Church for a festival where Honecker and the Archbishop of Canterbury were among the guests of honour, while Protestants poured into the GDR from all over the globe, including several million from West Germany.

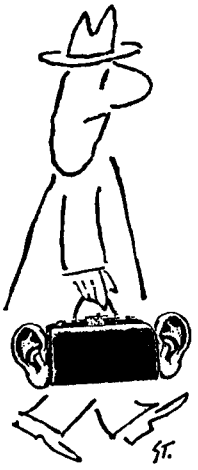
Once again, the State's motivation was manifestly mixed. Certainly it was not averse to earning extra hard currency from so much tourism, but the rehabilitation of Luther was also clearly a part of the new policy of seeking to strengthen GDR citizens' sense of national identity by reinstating great figures from the German past. Honecker may equally have wanted to upstage or embarrass the Church, or at least to manoeuvre it into a further *de facto* acknowledgement of the régime's moral respectability. So Church leaders, while glad of this new token of support and recognition, were also a little wary.

They have reason to be so, for even today, despite the *entente*, the State still pursues subtle or not-so-subtle discrimination against many individual lay Christians. If not as much as in former days, their children may still find it harder than others to be accepted for university study; and conscientious objectors are still harassed and penalised in their later careers. Practising Christians are barred from almost all teaching jobs ("But would they anyway be happy teaching Marxism-Leninism?" asked one *SED* man) and from posts of a political nature such as mayor or senior ministry official.

THE ISSUE OF what should be the role of Christians in an atheistic State—how far should they collaborate?—is one that constantly exercises priests and their congregations; and not all see alike. The régime, for its part, keeps up its steady wooing. "Surely we have a common struggle", Party members will tell Christians. "Like you, we desire peace, social justice and brotherly love. Was Marx's teaching so different from the Sermon on the Mount? Join us in building a better society!" And a number of priests react positively: they believe that this Communist régime is here to stay and they even admire its social achievements, so they are prepared to take part in some of its activities and to join in seeking to liberalise it further. Others are more reticent: but even they believe that it is perfectly possible to lead the Christian life in the GDR and that the Church needs the strength of all its supporters. So they continually urge their faithful not to try to emigrate. When the State sanctioned a large-scale exodus in 1984 and six pastors and their families left the Berlin-Brandenburg district, the Church grew worried and appealed to parishioners who had lodged exit applications:

> "We know of your distress and hopelessness . . . but remember that the protection of our Lord Jesus Christ guards us in this land too."

The "Informal" Economy



CURBS ON freedom of expression—over disarmament and a whole range of other issues—certainly infuriate an important minority of people, the kind who in Western societies would be opinion-makers, social critics or demonstrators. But they are seldom what the average citizen finds most irksome about life in the GDR. He has grown used to the system and in most cases has had no direct experience of democracy in the Western sense: so he does not miss it so much. His concerns are more practical and material.

If he were asked what annoys him most, he would probably put first the ban on travel to the West, and he might then add the distortions, omissions and tedious repetitiveness of the State newspapers and media, which he can compare nightly with Western TV. But more likely he would cite in second place the unpredictable shortages in the shops and the difficulties in getting the simplest repairs done. "If Communism were less plain inefficient, people would accept it much more easily", said one housewife. The shortages are not exactly an advertisement for the centralised planning system, and they contrast oddly with the decent overall level of prosperity, where in some respects the picture is quite positive. Some 99% of homes have refrigerators, 87% television sets, 91% washing machines (but only 22% have telephones), and the proportion of homes with private cars has risen since 1970 from 16 to 42%, which compares well with Russia's 13%. But, unless they have special Party contacts, people still have to wait between six and ten years for a new car, and then all they are likely to get is an ungainly little two-cylinder Trabant or Wartburg, made in the GDR and sold at an artificially high price. In the 1950s and '60s, the private ownership of cars was

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deliberately restricted on ideological grounds, for it was regarded as a sign of a bourgeois life-style. That no longer happens today; it is essentially the lack of parts and materials, lack of hard currency, and the absolute priority given to exports that make cars in such short supply.

These same factors are also in part responsible for the recurrent capricious shortages of smaller everyday items: but so is the clumsy centralised distribution system, and the inflexibility of an industrial planning process that will fix a factory's targets with scant regard to consumer needs. Suddenly nails will completely disappear from the shops, or wallpaper, or underpants—or they will re-emerge in bulk but all the same colour. A supermarket may be out of orange juice but have piles of rhubarb juice. And even in summer the selection of fresh fruit and vegetables is appalling. Hence the queues, and the frustrations of daily shopping that takes up far more time than in the West.

Much of the best of the GDR's output—of fresh flowers, clothing, furnishing, even things like bathroom tiles—is sold to the West for hard currency, so that only the second-rate remains, or maybe nothing. If some key item is suddenly unobtainable, it may well be that it has been used to exploit some unexpected export opportunity, as happened recently when Volkswagen placed a mass order for East German car tyres. But these perfectly sensible commercial deals are not reported in the media, which will never explain *why* some shortage is occurring, and officials when asked refuse to comment. Many of the older Party loyalists I met cited this privately as one of their own main criticisms of the régime. And the ordinary citizen, frustrated and kept in the dark, feels treated like a child. He has money, but not much choice—unless via friends or contacts in the West he has access to Deutschmarks, with which he can buy luxury imported goods at the special "Inter" shops that take hard currency only.

In the ordinary shops, people keep on the alert for something unusual and attractive to appear—good linen, say, or Meissen porcelain—and then they seize their chance and buy up a large stock, so as to be able to give most of it to friends in return for other items bought in the same way. "Life has reverted to barter as in pre-money days", said one man. "When I wanted to build a *dacha*, I couldn't find cement anywhere. Finally I swapped a lorryload of sand for some." Or people resort to subterfuge. I heard of a man who was trying to join the Party, so he needed to be very discreet about his Western contacts, especially as he had a brother in West Berlin. His washing-machine kept breaking down, and spare parts for it were unobtainable in the GDR; the brother was telephoned and came over with the spares, tactfully parking his car two blocks away.

People regard such deviousness as normal routine. Similarly, as services and repairs have been much neglected by the official planners, the State sector includes extremely few plumbers, cobblers, garages or the like. The gap is left to be filled by private initiative. Demand still greatly exceeds supply; but the State has become aware of the problem and has begun to give loans to encourage small entrepreneurs of this kind.

As in other Communist countries, private business on a modest scale is permitted: as well as the service and repair firms, a good many craftsmen, artisans, smaller shops and restaurants fall into this category. They tend to be family-run, but are allowed up to ten employees each. Most of the better bakeries, boutiques and bistros in the GDR are privately owned, and they help to make life more pleasant, for they have a more personal touch, and a better sense of quality and service, than the bureaucratic State concerns. Usually they work hard and successfully, and such families are often among the more prosperous in the GDR—for example, the boutique-owner I met in Dresden who had his own pleasure-boat on the Elbe. But they are careful not to flaunt their modest wealth as they might in the West, for this is still ideologically *mal vu* and it could invite closer tax scrutiny or other reprisals.

So the status-symbol society is turned on its head. Most little restaurants, though inside they may be quite cosy and elegant, look deliberately decrepit and down-at-heel from the outside, as if they were actually trying to deter custom. It is another reason for the GDR's general air of drabness.

Although commercial ventures are sometimes arbitrarily refused licences, it seems that on the whole the régime accepts and even discreetly encourages the private sector, for it knows how needed it is. So one might have expected these little firms to be increasing in number, seeing that they do so well and offer some scope for independence and initiative amid the collectivist wasteland. But curiously enough the total of full-time private businesses is actually declining—from 250,000 in 1955 to 80,000 today, according to one estimate. And this is not entirely due to State pressure. It is rather that in this passive niche-society few people are prepared to accept the risk and hard work involved. Often they find it difficult to raise the initial capital, or a restaurateur will be scared at having to depend on the vagaries of state food supplies. Or, despite official pledges, entrepreneurs may be afraid that the régime might one day change its policy and squeeze them out. For Party dogma, as opposed to practice, is still hostile to private enterprise, and ideologues sometimes denounce it. In this general climate, some bakeries have been closing down; the older men find no successors, as their sons prefer to work in factories where they have easier hours and less responsibility. On the other hand, there has been a marked increase in part-time private enterprise in the form of moonlighting by people with full-time official jobs, for here much less risk and commitment is involved. When his factory work is over, a man in the evenings or at weekends may turn his hand to car-repairing, house-building, and suchlike. Here he can get away with charging three or four times the official rate for these jobs, and will always find clients. This takes hard work, yes, but it is far more flexible and less worrying than running a proper business.

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Who Whom?

FAILURE TO REPORT OR explain consumer shortages is just one aspect of a general suppression of information and ultra-selectivity of news coverage in the State-controlled newspapers, radio, and television. Any event at home or abroad that embarrasses the régime or goes against its policy is passed over in silence or relegated to one or two inside paragraphs. Thus in 1980 the major crisis over *Solidarity* in neighbouring Poland was barely mentioned, even though people knew about it from watching West German TV; and when in the 1960s a senior GDR Minister committed suicide under political pressure and a storm broke out in the party, it was not reported at all, and the news only spread later by word of mouth.

As in other Soviet bloc countries, news priorities are entirely different from those in the West, and this is not just a matter of expected political bias but of a different philosophy of the role of the media. As Lenin laid down, the task of newspapers is not merely to report events but to "join in building socialism" by stimulating morale and defining objectives. Therefore they must systematically be optimistic about developments in the GDR and the Soviet Union, and must produce daily evidence of the decline of capitalism in the West. But, because the distortions are so obvious, this educative campaign tends to defeat its own ends when directed at an intelligent readership with its own television window on the West. "Why does the régime not treat us as adults and tell us the truth?" was a complaint I heard widely, even from Party sympathisers. "It asks for our trust, but its lies and suppressions simply serve to destroy it."

Much the most important daily paper is *Neues Deutschland*, the GDR's equivalent of *Pravda*, with a circulation of about one million. This is the organ of the *SED*, and like the Party's numerous other publications is controlled by its Department of Agitation and Propaganda. It is often described as "good for use as toilet paper, and for its small ads if you want to buy a second-hand car—but not for much else." Its main headlines and news stories are often planned weeks in advance, for they tend to relate to Anniversaries, Party Congresses, or Economic Progress reports, and they are repetitive, pompus, and predictable, in the genre of "DELEGATES UNANIMOUSLY PRAISE WORKERS' COLLECTIVES" or "HONECKER THANKS SOVIET UNION FOR LATEST PEACE INITIATIVES".

Foreign events are given little coverage for their own sake. The *Greenpeace* scandal in France in 1985, for example, though you might have thought this counted as evidence of Western decay, got no more than an occasional inside paragraph. Probably this was because the GDR then had a policy of friendship with the Mitterrand Government, and because the régime anyway treats espionage as a non-subject (on the dwellers-in-glass-houses-shouldn't-throw-stones principle?).

The small "token" parties have their own newspapers too, indirectly controlled by the *SED*. All papers give extensive space to sport and culture, but very little to crime or gossip; local weeklies are sometimes able to touch on real local problems, such as pollution, vandalism, or breakdowns in supplies, but these publications are not seen outside their own areas. The Churches are allowed their own weeklies and magazines, which are distributed privately among their members and must be careful not to touch on politics or other controversial matters.

As for the State-run radio and TV networks, they quite often produce cultural and entertainment programmes of some quality (I saw an excellent one about D. H. Lawrence), but their documentaries and home-grown serials tend to be of the earnest "socialism-building" kind (the life of a GDR policeman, or how a young divorcee makes a new life, thanks to the support of her factory comrades), while the news and current affairs programmes are run in much the same way as *Neues Deutschland*. So citizens turn for their information to the West German networks, with which the GDR will not even try to compete: news editors privately will tend to take the defeatist line: "We know the West will cover this story better than we can, so let's not mention it."

The only retort that GDR-TV does make to the Western competition is to run a programme called *Schwarze Kanal* (*Black Channel*) that seeks to show up the "lies" and "distortions" on West German TV in the previous week. Its editors will claim that the Western networks deliberately beam propaganda to the GDR, just as the Washington-backed Radio Free Europe does from Munich: but this is not so. West German stations keep staff correspondents in East Berlin and they cover GDR events as fully as they can; but essentially this is because their own audiences are interested. No programmes are made specifically for GDR viewers.

I FOUND THAT EAST GERMANS are more indignant about the shortcomings of the media than about any other aspect of life in the GDR except consumer shortages and travel restrictions—and the grumblers include many of the Party's own members and supporters.

"The failure to mention events like the Prague Embassy sit-in", said one elderly Communist, "makes the media a laughing-stock and destroys its credibility, so that people ask: 'If they lie about this, what else might they be hiding?'" And one leading writer, basically in favour of the régime, said to me:

> "Censorship in literature has eased up—that's just fiction, so it's not taken so seriously. But in the media there's been no improvement. For example, a new stretch of *Autobahn* was opened recently, then suddenly kept closed for three months. But there was no word of explanation in the Press, even though everyone was talking about it. When I asked a *Neues Deutschland* editor, he merely said, 'We're not obliged to report everything.' And why this policy? Well, I do not think it is purely a rigorous line coming from the top of the Party. Editors could get away with much

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more open and critical reporting if they tried. But they have grown timid and lazy over the years; they can't be bothered to cope with controversy, so they practise self-censorship more than they need. It's appalling. . . ."

As elsewhere in the Soviet bloc, the Party and the State apparatus operate in parallel, down through a double hierarchy from the summit to the local level. At the very top, controlling both these hierarchical channels, is the all-powerful Politburo, a non-elected self-perpetuating body made up of some 25 senior *SED* officials, Ministers, and military men. It alone decides all policy. Below it, on the Party side of the dual power structure, comes the policy-executing Secretariat whose general secretary (today Honecker) is also the Politburo's leader; and below this is the Central Committee, whose members are elected every five years by the Party Congress. Seldom does either of these bodies defy the wishes of the leadership. Then further down the *SED* hierarchy are the regional bodies and local cells.

On the State side of the structure, immediately below the Politburo, come the Council of Ministers (a Cabinet) and junior ministers. They in practice take their orders from the Politburo: but constitutionally they are also responsible to the *Volkskammer* (People's Chamber), a 500-member Parliament made up of the *SED* and eight other parties and mass organisations, all nine together forming a coalition known as the National Front. It is the *SED* that effectively controls the National Front, and its dominant role is even written into the GDR's Constitution, which declares the State to be "led by the working class and its Marxist-Leninist Party".

The *Volkskammer* is little more than a rubber-stamp assembly. It meets for only four or five days each year, its votes are generally unanimous, and it is elected from a single list of official candidates selected by the National Front. Much the same applies to the regional and municipal councils, where the *SED* tactfully allows the *CDU* and other parties to have their share of mayors. Even foreign observers generally sympathetic to the GDR's other achievements have few illusions about the nature of its democracy.

It would be wrong, however, to conclude that in the GDR there is no public opinion, nor any debate on public issues. Debate does take place, but not in public. It goes on within the two-million-strong ranks of the *SED*, where even village and factory cells can express their views; these are then filtered up to the Party hierarchy, where at least they are listened to, if not acted upon. This is about as far as "public opinion" enjoys any organised forum. The Party rulers will also listen to the views of what has been described as "the institutionalised counter-élite", made up of scientists, academics, industrial managers, and senior officials in economic ministries who must dutifully execute the Politburo's policies but can also express their opinions, at least on specialist non-political matters. So the rulers do consult the ruled. But of course they retain the last word, and there is no democratic means of ousting them through elections.

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A concluding article will appear in the April issue

The Boards

It was deep,
the echoing walls
searching the earth,
delving into dark

secrets not yielding
to sight or scrutiny.

He peered into it,
catching only glints
or ripples of moonlight

still water within.
Was there anything to touch?

He was fearful
and shied from sheer
distance and solemn silence.

He turned, ashamed
but angry inside;
the book was slammed
shut; the boards
forever nailed over
the hard brick walls.

Stephen Wade

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Gillian Tindall

Faith

"OH WHY", COMPLAINED GEORGINA, "could you not have let them live? *Why?*" she repeated in a tone of more incredulous anger.

The small lead Madonna looked sulky. Perhaps she was tired of holding her plump infant aloft to the unresponsive woods. Or perhaps she was simply tired of the procession of whining human beings demanding favours of her over the years. But probably, Georgina decided, there were fewer of those than there had once been. Life moved faster today: it was 1919. Cars were multiplying on the roads even in this remote part of the country, and even the farm-hands and their lumpy girls had other ideas than praying for their hearts' desire to a Lady of lead and stone. It was, as everyone said, the War that had done it. Evidently the War had had all sorts of sinister magic powers, besides the central one of removing from life Georgina's only son Raymond and his best friend.

The War had, in a sense, removed her husband too, but Georgina did not regard that bereavement as being in the same class as the loss of Raymond. Charles had been fifty-five in 1915 when he had dropped dead from a heart attack which kind friends hastened to attribute to "wartime overwork" but which Georgina knew quite well was due, rather, to obesity and uncertain temper. She had mourned him sincerely—after all, a husband is a husband, and she would miss him for all sorts of reasons—and when, in the early summer of 1918, in one of the last great slaughters of the War, Raymond had been removed too, she had agreed readily with those friends who said, "At least poor Charles was spared this sad day. . . ." But, since 1915, she had really thought very little of Charles, whereas Raymond, killed a year ago today, had been, literally, always in her thoughts.

"Why?", she repeated censoriously to the Madonna. Her tone was not so much agonised as accusing. It was almost as if she were telling the Lady, "You have made things very difficult for yourself by this oversight: how will you sort the matter out?" For it was inconceivable that gifted, handsome Raymond, not to mention his almost equally gifted and handsome school-friend Laurence, should have died meaninglessly, pointlessly, by mere vulgar ill-fortune, as (it was said) a million and a half others had died, in mud and obscurity. (In point of fact, worldwide it had been calculated that eleven million had died, including two million French and considerably more German soldiers, but Georgina counted only the British dead.) No, Raymond and Laurence's deaths, however terrible, must be part of some complex, yet-to-be-revealed pattern: to think otherwise would be insupportable.

It was the Catholicism in which Georgina had been reared that made her so certain on this point. Both Charles and she had come from Old Catholic families, the kind that had subsisted in England in quiet comfort for generations, debarred by their faith from public office but content in a deep awareness of their own invincible superiority. They cultivated their lands, sent their sons to universities abroad, occasionally married their daughters into foreign, impeccably Catholic families. Even though times had changed the traditions still subsisted, as if the old families rejected the toleration now extended to them. Raymond himself would probably have been sent to Heidelberg had the War not supervened, and Georgina had even had her eye on a pretty second cousin for him in the French branch of the family. Waste, tragic waste. . . . No, certainly, the Lady, or rather the ultimate celestial arbiter whom she represented, would have to redeem her error. Of that, Georgina was obscurely, irrationally but resolutely certain.

However the Faith which gave her this certitude also posed a problem for her. Since that terrible day a year ago when the telegram had come, her dominant thought, which was with her every morning when she woke and last thing at night after she had said her deceptively submissive prayers, was that death was after all surmountable. It was only a veil between this world and the next, and such a veil—surely—Raymond of all people would have the will and ingenuity to penetrate. He was taking his time, certainly. But he would assuredly reach her—make some sign to her of his continuing existence. He *must*.

However (as Georgina, a cradle Catholic, could not fail to be aware) such signs were looked on askance by the Church. One was assured the veil was only a veil, told there was absolutely no doubt about the Life Everlasting and even the Resurrection of the Body—and yet, so to speak, telegrams, letters, and signs of affection between the other side of the veil and this were apparently forbidden. It seemed very illogical, thought Georgina crossly. Raymond had always written such good letters too, from school, from France, full of descriptions of his daily life and solicitude for hers. For

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two years of war he had written frequently, even when at the Front: in death he would never, she knew, have willingly left her like this without a letter, a sign. . . . It could only be that They (whoever They were, tiresome celestial authorities, one must suppose) were somehow preventing him from communicating with her, his mother. It seemed extraordinarily mean of them, and Georgina was quite losing respect for the Church in consequence.

SHE HAD MADE ENQUIRIES, and it appeared that Protestants, those semi-atheists of whom she knew little, were allowed much more liberty in communicating with the dead, even to attending seances for the purpose. . . . She was tempted to wonder if, after all, another form of Christianity might have something to be said for it. Now that Charles was dead, and she had no one to please but herself. . . . Except her brother Simon, and he, living in eccentric bachelorhood in Norfolk, hardly counted. Not that she would *advertise* any change, of course. . . .

However she had hopes of today. The Church paid considerable attention to anniversaries, let it pay attention to this one. She had made a declaration of anger to the statuette: let Them make her some answer. She returned to her large, comfortable, silent house in militant mood, thinking at the same time that she really must speak to Jameson, the head gardener, about the untidiness of the lower herbaceous border.

Entering the little morning-room where she commonly sat when on her own—and it was seldom that she was not on her own these days—her attention was suddenly arrested. The vase of early marigolds that had been on the round table earlier that day had been moved to her bureau.

Yet the room had already been done by the maids that morning before she had been in it. She had written letters at the bureau before going to walk in the woods.

Outwardly, and even to herself, she remained calm. But her heart began to beat much faster than usual, and thus she knew that something of tremendous import had occurred.

Marigolds had been Raymond's favourite flower. Or rather, he had always expressed himself amused and touched by their "wonderful vulgarity". Wonderful indeed. And surely these in the vase were more glowing than when she had left them, as if vibrant with a secret life?

Trembling with inner excitement, Georgina sat quietly down in her fireside chair, hands folded in her lap, to await a further sign.

Shortly before it was time for luncheon the bell at the front of the house rang. Georgina jumped violently, as if the sound had been much louder than it really was, but naturally remained seated.

The maid appeared: "A gentleman, M'm". Georgina looked automatically for a silver tray and a card, but there was none.

"Did he give his name?"

"No, M'm. But he asked for you. Said he had a message for you."

"Show him in."

Young. Tall. Not bad-looking but moved awkwardly. Dressed like a gentleman. Needed a haircut. Could he really be the bearer of the Sign for which she was waiting? Stifling a rising disappointment—Georgina had never been accustomed to show her feelings before strangers, or even before intimates, for that matter—she murmured sympathetically, "*Do* sit down", and arranged herself in an attitude of listening expectancy.

The young man sat, with an awkward alacrity. In a voice that seemed educated but slightly strangulated, as if he had some speech impediment or other problem, he said:

"I didn't give your maid my name. Servants tend to get it wrong, I find. . . . But perhaps you recognise me?"

She hesitated. She felt his yearning that she should say yes, and indeed there *was* something about him. . . . But no. She really could not honestly say she knew who he was.

"I'm sorry", she said.

"Ah, I thought you might not. I know I've changed a good deal. I've been through a lot this year. . . . It's Laurence. Laurence de la Foy—Raymond's friend. . . . Surely you recognise me *now*, Mrs Laidlow?"

AS HE WENT ON TO EXPLAIN, she studied him carefully. Dark hair and eyes, fresh complexion, bony face. . . . Yes, it *could* be Laurence. If he had lost a certain amount of boyish flesh and also grown several inches this last year. . . . And, come to think of it, it must be a good three years since she had seen Laurence, at that last Prize Day at Downside. A man, let alone a boy barely out of his teens, could change a good deal in three years. And, thinking further, she had probably never met him more than four times altogether. She had always felt she knew him well, because Raymond used to talk about him a lot, and then after the boys had been killed she had corresponded with his poor mother and they had exchanged photos and memories. . . . But she had only ever met him to talk to briefly; he had never stayed here, at Laidlow Court. There had been talk of him doing so, she rather thought, but Raymond had never really wanted school friends there in his precious holiday time. He and she had been so close, and that was their time together. . . .

Still uncertain, but increasingly convinced it must be as the young man said—for why should he lie?—she studied this Laurence returned from the dead. But no, not apparently dead after all—he was explaining all to her:

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". . . And so, after we escaped from the prison camp, I found my way back to France. To Paris, actually. Last November. The Armistice had just been signed and everything was in such a muddle it wasn't hard to slip through. . . . I found myself a job. Washing up in a restaurant. Yes, hard work. But I'm not afraid of that. At least it's kept me from starving."

"But I don't understand", she said, not for the first time. "Why haven't you made yourself known to the authorities—to the War Office—to your family? They still believe you are dead!"

"I thought I had explained all that", he said patiently. (He was a patient young man, she could see that.) "How can I make myself known just like that? I told you about our miraculous escape, but Raymond and I are technically deserters, as I said. And the Defence of the Realm Act has not yet been repealed. If we were both to come out of hiding now we could still be—shot. In cold blood. At dawn, you know."

Her hand went to her face in horror. He half smiled, as if he had known it would—or as if he had faced all this within himself and come to terms with it.

"You say my Raymond *is* still alive?" she asked, when she had recovered her composure.

"He certainly was when I last saw him, on the road to Bruges. As I said, we went our separate ways. It seemed—safer."

"And—he's likely to have survived since?"

"Well, I have survived, haven't I?" said Laurence gently. It quieted her beating heart when he spoke like that, smiled like that. She could see now why Raymond had thought so much of him.

"You must remember, though", he added still more gently, "that, as I said, he has been wounded. Shell-shocked, and wounded in the face. I tell you this so that if—when—you see him again you find him changed, you will not be too upset. But he is still your son."

She said slowly, mainly to herself:

"This explains everything." She really meant: this explains why Raymond did not try to reach me through the veil of death. He was not dead at all, so how could he?

That he might, even in hiding, have tried to reach her through the normal postal services, was a commonplace thought she did not care to explore. Georgina was not a commonplace person.

The young man seemed to relax. He smiled at her lovingly, then asked, "Do you mind awfully if I smoke? My nerves, you know . . . since we were both buried in that shell-hole. . . ."

She said ceremonially: "I have to thank you for saving my son's life."

He replied at once: "Oh, he would have done the same for me."

Yes, that was the authentic tone of their schoolboy closeness! She recognised it from Raymond's own letters. Yet something still worried her. She said:

"But what I don't quite understand—Oh, do excuse me; there are some here in this box." For Laurence, having mentioned cigarettes, was now patting each of his pockets in turn as if he had forgotten his own.

"Turkish this side", she said, "Virginian the other."

He took one, lit it. (It struck a very faintly wrong note that he did not offer the box to her, but no doubt, she told herself, he assumed she did not smoke.) Then, inhaling like a man who has wanted a cigarette for some time, he said:

"I expect you're going to ask me why I've come first to you rather than to my own mother?"

It was not anything as specific as that which was worrying Georgina, but now he mentioned it—"Yes, why have you?" she asked.

"Well, as I told you, I'm still technically a deserter. In hiding. So is Raymond. That, I'm sure, is why he has stayed in France. And my own home is exactly where the military authorities might be looking for me. So I decided to come first to you instead. . . ."

"But the authorities believe you to be dead", said Georgina promptly. "Your poor mother had a telegram from the War Office, as I did. It said *Missing, Presumed Dead*."

"Yes, but my mother has never believed that", he said equally promptly. "I expect you knew that."

"Well. . . . It was very hard to believe. Of course one goes on hoping against hope. Rightly, as it turns out!" She smiled at him, wanting to cry, to take his hands in hers, wanting to embrace him as if he had been Raymond himself. Yet something in his gentle, assured yet oddly remote manner held her back. Did not people say indeed that the men who survived the full horror of the War and returned from it were mysteriously changed, set apart in some way from their former loved ones, as if returned from the land of death itself. Would Raymond be like this too? *And shell-shocked. . . . And wounded in the face. . . .* If so, she must accept it.

"I expect you saw this", Laurence said.

SHE LOOKED DOWN, and found he was holding out to her a newspaper cutting. It was in French, and it said that Mrs Noreen de la Foy would welcome any information on her son, 2nd Lt. Laurence de la Foy, 14th Rifles, or on his friend Lt. Raymond Laidlow, 14th Rifles, both believed to be still alive somewhere in France or Belgium. It gave home addresses for both boys.

"No", she said slowly, "I didn't know about this."

How typical of poor Norrie, was her first, unworthy thought. A newspaper advertisement—really! But then, immediately afterwards, came a gush of humility and gratitude that Norrie had had the hardihood and—yes—the faith, to use such a means to an end. For if the boys were really found alive. . . .

Of course they were found! Here, already, was Laurence. And he was promising to track down Raymond for her. He knew just where, in Belgium, to look, he said. He would have done so already had he

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not been absolutely broke. Really, only just about able to keep body and soul together at all by this wretched washing-up job—and he had let that go and used his last franc coming to England to see her. "I hitched lifts in farmers' carts the last part of the journey from Dover", he confessed. "That's why I look a bit scruffy."

This boyish frankness of his disarmed her—if, indeed, she had any armament left. She gave him all the money she had: four pounds, ten shillings from her handbag, and another twenty pounds that she always kept in reserve in her desk drawer.

"Now I feel more than ever honour-bound to find poor Raymond for you", he said. "In fact, I start now."

"But are you sure", she said, still obscurely troubled in some area of her being that she could not identify, "that you won't at least contact your mother while you are in England. After all, she still fears you may be dead! Won't you at least let me telephone her from here to give her the wonderful news? You could speak to her—"

"Please, please don't, I beg you", he said earnestly, almost urgently. "I have told you how dangerous my position is. Would you want my poor mother to find me again only to see me arrested and—shot? No, no, let me escape abroad again. I tell you, I shan't rest now till I have found Raymond for you, and have at last got a message from him to you. And, for my own safety—and Raymond's too, of course—I must ask you not to mention this visit to anyone. No one at all. Not even yet to my mother. Poor mother. She might—do something rash. You promise, Mrs Laidlow?"

She promised.

The lunch-gong sounded and she asked him if he would not stay to eat, but he refused. She offered a drink—a cup of tea at least?—instead, but he would not stay. Clearly he was very anxious and felt the need to be gone.

"I'll show you out myself", she said.

As her hand was on the door of the morning-room, he said hurriedly:

"I hate to mention the subject again, Mrs Laidlow, but if it *does* take me some time to find Raymond I might need. . . ."

"Of course", she said, at once understanding and embarrassed for him. "If—that is, do you have a bank account? Oh no, how stupid of me, of course you can't have at the moment."

"An international postal order to Poste Restante at the main post office in Ostend would find me", he said.

Again, she promised.

After he had gone she went into the dining-room, where her cold luncheon was arranged for her on a lace cloth, but she did not eat. She sat with her hands in her lap apparently looking out on to the sunlit lawns. But an observer, had there been anyone to observe, would have said that she was looking, rather, into some region within herself.

It is possible that, for the first time in a year, she saw the future. If so, it was a shadowed and strange one, bearing little relation to the sunlit futures she had been accustomed to survey in the past. Georgina was not a fool, nor inexperienced. She had comprehended at once in a general way, even if she did not look at the details, what odd and daunting components would make up this new future.

She saw already the long waits, the continuing loneliness, the aching frustration and worse fear, as well as the moments of thrill and happiness. She envisaged—and then thrust from her mind as trivial tiresomenesses—uncomfortable scenes with a procession of unsympathetic male figures: her lawyer and bank manager no doubt, her brother Simon certainly (Oh, *he* would never believe, she thought contemptuously), maybe eventually with someone at the War Office itself. She foresaw also delicate sessions with women friends and relations, who would appear sympathetic but would (oh yes, she knew) cluck and murmur disparagingly behind her back. They might even refer to her as "poor Georgina". They would speak of "impostors" and "temporary gentlemen" . . . . Well, she was prepared for that. She was prepared for anything.

Norrie de la Foy at least would—surely?—be an ally. Together they would confront an unbelieving world. And they would win their sons back from the jaws of death—

But, no, she would not contact Norrie with the wonderful news just yet. The young man (Laurence, of course) had made her promise not to. And anyway. . . . She found she wanted to nurse in her own mind this miraculous thing that had happened before communicating it even to Laurence's mother.

THE GREAT THING was to believe. She had been taught that from infancy. Faith could do everything—well, almost everything. There were genuine miracles. *Believe*. . . . She clenched her fists. How lucky that she had always been a determined person. She had a number of times in the past year—she admitted it now—been tempted to abandon belief, to turn from the Presence. Oh yes, her Faith had been tested. But now it would triumph. With her Faith she would achieve what very few people could achieve; Raymond himself, in some form or shape, albeit only for fleeting moments, would be given back to her.

In a state close to quiet ecstasy she sat on before her untouched meal facing the sunny, empty lawns.

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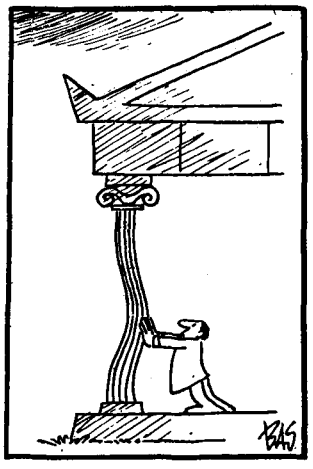
Anthony Hartley

Does the Ambassador Have a Future?

Diplomats in the Era of Interdependence



In the late 19th century, Stanley Lane-Poole—a learned orientalist and biographer of Stratford Canning—described his hero's achievements during his long service as British Ambassador in Constantinople: "Fate sent him to the East, and he took up the burden—for burden it was to the last—and did there what he would fain have done at home: he made the name of England great with a moral force emanating from the strength of his own character. Beautiful in feature, pure in mind, with the self-confidence without which no man can be called great, and a humility which honestly depreciated his own powers, with commanding intellect and unswerving principle, he held the balance of power between contending nations, and virtually ruled the country in which he dwelt. . . ."[1] Elsewhere in the book we are told that the domination exercised by Canning over the Porte was such that when, angered by some crass act of Turkish officialdom, he rushed down on foot from Pera to the Seraglio without waiting for his horse to be saddled, the Sultan's ministers, learning of his arrival, would hide themselves in the recesses of the building.

Some 130 years after Canning's departure from Constantinople, another British Ambassador to an oriental country gave a somewhat different picture of the style in which he tackled his mission to Iran. In the first place, "the Embassy was primarily organised as an agency for the promotion of British exports and for the general commercial, financial and economic interests of Britain. . . ." Secondly, Sir Anthony Parsons was convinced that the Shah "would resent and strongly react to any attempt to advise him on how to conduct Iran's affairs." He, therefore—wrongly as he now believes—failed to comment critically to the Shah on the authoritarian clumsiness that had ruined the royal plans for internal liberalisation. Also, because of Persian sensitivity about past British activities in Iran, the Ambassador went out of his way "not to use a number of obvious British sources for information gathering".[2] In the event, Sir Anthony was taken by surprise by the sudden overthrow of the Pahlavi dynasty through a traditional combination of mullahs, intellectuals, and "bazaaris". His book is a dispassionate and honourable, though inconclusive, attempt to examine how this came about.

The objectives and style of British diplomacy in Tehran during the last five years of the Shah's reign were quite in accordance with the views of informed opinion as to the duties of the Foreign Service. The Plowden Committee on overseas representation (1962-63) had established the principle of the primacy of commercial interest:

> "The survival of Britain, let alone her influence, depends on trade. The work of our representatives overseas must be increasingly dedicated to the support of British trade. It must be regarded as a first charge on the resources of the overseas service. . . ."

This view was re-emphasised by the Val Duncan Committee (1968-69) which went further by suggesting that there should be an "area of concentration" which should consist of a "dozen or so countries in Western Europe plus North America" and "a few industrially advanced nations outside the European/North Atlantic area with whom British relations will be very close and important for different reasons. Examples are Australia and Japan". It added cheerfully that "the other category of countries comprises the rest of the world".

This concentration on industrialised societies had a sort of mad logic about it; but logic (and much else) was thrown out of the window in the report of the "Think-Tank" group under Sir Kenneth Berrill at the end of the 1970s. This document not only ranked political reporting as the least of an embassy's duties, but also identified as particularly important relations with the United States, the European Community, the United Nations, and the Commonwealth. Even the Soviet Union enjoyed little prominence in "the New Diplomacy", and countries like Iran might just as well not have existed at all.

With such a background, it is hardly surprising that the diplomatic methods of Sir Anthony Parsons should contrast strongly with those adopted by the "great Elchi". Of course,

[1] Stanley Lane-Poole, *The Life of Stratford Canning, Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe* (1885), vol. I, p. 2.

[2] Anthony Parsons, *The Pride and the Fall: Iran 1974-1979* (1984), pp. 40, 141.

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the change in style reflects a difference in power. When England was the main defender of the crumbling Ottoman empire, its Ambassador could permit himself a plainness of speech in his relations with the Turkish administration which a century-and-a-half later would not have advanced the purposes of a British representative in Tehran, whose task it was to ensure that some of the lavish expenditure of oil money fell into British pockets. For this essential, if utilitarian, end, it was necessary to accept the eccentricities and arbitrary behaviour of a Middle Eastern despot.[3]

But Sir Anthony's cautionary tale does raise the question of how far a British interest in the increase of trade can be divorced from a general appreciation, and, indeed, criticism, of the political viability of a régime. Moralistic nagging about the internal affairs of another country is certainly undesirable. But it can surely be the legitimate business of an Ambassador to express to the government to which he is accredited the dangers of its policies as they are perceived at home.

To refrain from criticising Third World governments can lead to the worse error of flattering them. The role of a "candid friend" is never a particularly grateful one, but sometimes both duty and self-interest make it essential. Even in the case of a country with money to burn and contracts to award, it cannot be to the interest of Britain (or anyone else) to allow a régime to collapse into anarchy for want of a little candour.

In the case of Iran, the picture given by Sir Anthony is of a Shah too isolated and too touchy to accept advice. This may well have been so; but Sir Anthony now thinks that, on at least one occasion, he should have tried what candour could do. More generally, it seems that, in a country like Iran, too great a concentration by British diplomacy on immediate economic advantage risks being counter-productive. Such a policy breaks down the moment people start acting from motives which cannot be subsumed in economic rationality.[4] The moral of Sir Anthony's self-examination might be that the bias towards trade given to British overseas representation is dangerously one-sided, leaving out of account the need to encourage political stability and make contact even with the submerged political forces of a country.[5]

In any case, the contrast in diplomatic style shows how lofty were the ambitions to which a 19th-century envoy might aspire. Nor was this purely a matter of power. Canning certainly believed that he had something to impart to the Ottoman empire—Christians (and other minorities) to save from persecution, reforms to suggest, modern ideals to set before its rulers. Such moral self-confidence is hardly to be found today, even among American Ambassadors. The relativism and ambivalence that now accompany power in Western Europe and North America make it difficult to school others in any convincing manner. In our day the role of an Ambassador can no longer be played in the heroic vein. Controlled by telex and telephone from his Foreign Ministry, descended on by visiting Cabinet Ministers, he has dwindled to an executant of policies decided elsewhere. Bold local initiatives on the part of ambassadors tend to be unwelcome to foreign ministers, as Ambassador Hans Kroll discovered when, in the late 1950s, he tried to start his own version of *Ostpolitik* a decade before Bonn was ready for it.

THIS DEPARTURE OF diplomatic glories in the field has also apparently been paralleled by a deterioration in the position of Foreign Ministries within the hierarchy of government. In Britain, over recent years, there have been prolonged periods of disagreement between the Prime Minister's office and the Foreign Office. In Washington the US National Security Council (NSC) has often outdistanced the State Department in competition for the attention of the President—not always to the benefit of the Executive Branch, as the recent arms shipments to Iran show. In France of recent years the Quai d'Orsay has often been headed by a technician, and the major foreign-policy decisions have been taken at the Elysée, where, indeed, the Gaullist interpretation of the Fifth Republic's constitution firmly assigns them. Over the last fifteen years (in contrast to what had gone before) the post of British Foreign Secretary has not usually led to that of Prime Minister (the exception was James Callaghan), and the Falklands episode depreciated the stock of the Foreign Office in Whitehall as much as it raised that of the Ministry of Defence.[6]

This decline within government of the institutions of diplomacy might perhaps be put down to the dissolution of that caste of social equals which for so long presided over the "Grand Diplomacy" of the 19th and early 20th centuries, outliving, in its lengthy occupancy of diplomatic posts, the aristocratic class on which it was based. But there is more to the relative unpopularity of professional diplomats within their own politicial societies than their upper-class manners or their transitory privileges.

For it seems that the conditions under which foreign policy is now conducted have become such as to subject those professionally concerned with it to divergent and potentially conflicting demands. Their profession urges them in one direction; the political exigencies of Ministers in another; and the tug-of-war is attended by angry leading-articles or bitingly rhetorical questions in Parliament.

These pressures originate from two different perceptions of

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[3] If British officials are to spend much of their careers in such tasks, perhaps we shall see the development of a type of character formed by a daily occupation of flattering and cajoling. In that case, we would be back to the characteristics of the nabobs and taipans described by Arnold Toynbee in the second volume of his *Study of History*. Would so much "angling after contracts" always be compatible with the dignity of a representative of the Queen?

[4] Sir Anthony's recollections give singularly little idea of what the Mullahs are like or of the nature of their hold over Persian opinion. What he clearly needed was a good "Oriental Secretary", but this type of post was abolished by the Foreign Office a number of years back. A better picture of these grim clergymen is given in V. S. Naipaul's *Among the Believers: An Islamic Journey* (1981).

[5] Doubts about this emphasis on trade have also been expressed by another British ambassador, Sir Paul Wright, in his autobiography *A Brittle Glory* (1986).

[6] It would, of course, be unfair to blame the Foreign Office as a body of officials for the tragically confused events leading to the Argentine landings in the Falklands. The fault was ministerial, and it was properly atoned for by the resignations of three of Mrs Thatcher's Ministers.

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the idea of sovereignty. In the past it was generally admitted that states were absolutely sovereign within their own borders. The limits of their exercise of sovereignty were marked by the territorial existence of other states. An encroachment on national independence was habitually seen as being caused by the action of another state, and the customary reaction was to consider that state as an adversary and potential enemy. The public adoption of such an attitude enabled political leaders to rally their citizens behind them in resistance to an external threat.

These jostling sovereign units could be grouped in alliances or, more rarely, in a "Concert of Europe" to maintain the *status quo*. In general, an anthropomorphic application of the individualism propagated by the Romantic movement caused states to be seen as personalities. They were presumed to have many of the characteristics of individual human beings and were represented symbolically by such figures as John Bull, Marianne, Uncle Sam, or Germania. Sovereignty existed in an absolute form up to their boundaries and ceased beyond them, though it came to include colonies, protectorates, and territories conquered from other states.

After two World Wars, this absolute view of sovereignty began to appear less realistic and less satisfactory. Between 1918 and 1939 the existence of the League of Nations was an unsuccessful attempt to limit sovereignty in so far as its exercise could lead to aggressive and threatening behaviour towards other states. After 1945 a desire for improved forms of international cooperation began to express itself in functional international institutions—especially in bodies designed to avert those pre-War economic crises to which, probably wrongly, the origins of war were attributed.[7] New institutions—such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and the European Economic Community (EEC)—corresponded to a conviction on the part of industrialised countries that prosperity was indivisible and that, to ensure its continuance, it was necessary to create rules governing international economic conduct.

Such a development recognised, but also accelerated, the rise of a world economic structure, in which arbitrary or selfish behaviour on the part of one participant was felt as pain by other players. Easier and, above all, faster communications had turned much of the world of states into a "market", whose functioning was adversely affected by artificial hindrances or sharp practice on the part of individual members. It was, therefore, held to be in the interests of all concerned that this system should work smoothly—without economically strong states being unduly advantaged or weak ones unduly depressed. At first the system comprised only the industrialised states of North America and Western Europe, plus Australia, South Africa, and Japan. Later it was extended to other countries: Far Eastern states such as Korea and Singapore, and the Arab oil-producers and Latin American industrialised societies such as Brazil and Mexico.

THE EXISTENCE of such a system, however, with the constraints imposed by its supporting network of agreements, implied a revision of the practice of sovereignty. For the first time a number of decisions, which had previously been held to be the responsibility of individual states, were to be largely determined by external factors. For instance, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) forbade a policy of discriminatory protectionism directed against the exports of other states. Traditionally, states had been free to fix duties as they pleased, inhibited only by fear of retaliation. Now they had to submit to a negotiation within the GATT to fix compensation for any trading partner damaged by their actions.

Of course, they themselves, if they had a complaint about the trading policies of a neighbour, could also profit from the system. But none the less it is clear that the acceptance of such legal constraints on the power to fix duties on goods of foreign origin marked a surrender of sovereignty on the part of those countries that were involved in it. Essentially, adherence to such agreements meant the striking of a bargain through which a state abandoned a portion of its sovereignty in return for the advantages it stood to gain from the orderly operation of the international economic system. To protest against such arrangements in the name of intact sovereignty is a little like objecting to the rules of cricket in the name of free will. Of course, any player is free to break the rules; but then he will no longer be playing cricket, and his protest will be pointless. Similarly, the erosion of national sovereignty is an essential condition of the enjoyment of the benefits distributed by an ordered international economic system.

Another illustration of the same argument is British membership of the European Community. In order to gain for itself a more secure economic position as part of a large trading block, better able to defend Western European interests against strong economic powers such as the United States or Japan than any of its individual members would be, Britain has accepted obligations which include the precedence given to European legislation over British law. The passage of the "Single European Act" through Parliament has recently raised this question again; but it is little use denouncing the Act's minor inroads on British sovereignty in the name of the supremacy of the Queen or Parliament. If these are felt to be unendurable (as they are, for example, by Enoch Powell) then the remedy can only be to surrender the benefits which derive from them. It is a question of the balance of advantage; but it remains doubtful if even the sternest champion of unrestricted sovereignty would be prepared to undergo a re-enactment of the continental blockade for the sake of making his point.

Even in the field of Defence—traditionally the palladium of national sovereignty—the same need for collective action to achieve security and the same consequences for national independence can be seen at work. Ballistic missiles and advanced technology in communications require instant re-

[7] This bias towards "the economic" was also due to the preponderant role played by the United States in the creation of an institutional framework for the post-War settlement. In their belief in the decisive part played by the economic infrastructure in influencing the political suprastructure, all American statesmen appear to be unconscious Marxists at heart.

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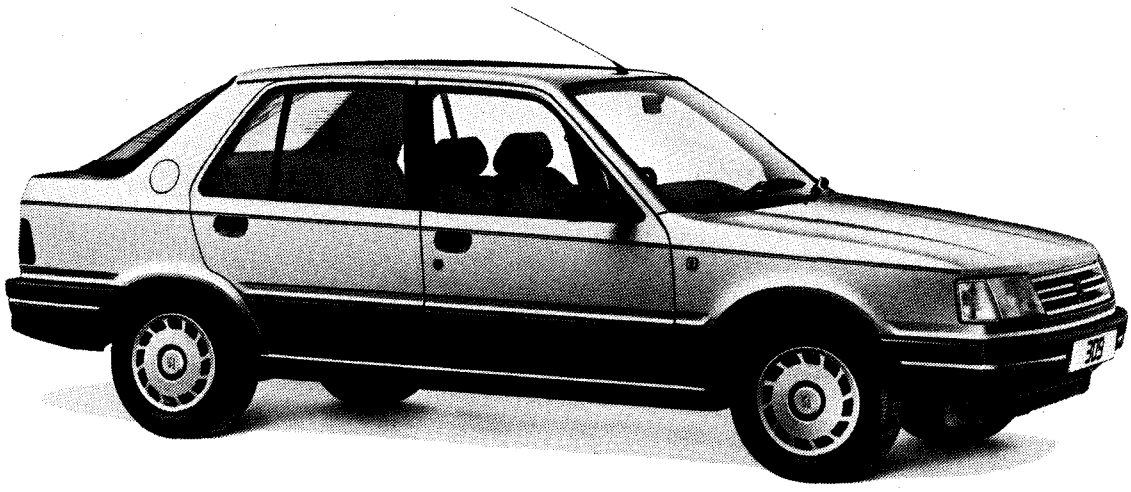

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actions from states to any military threat. Accordingly, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) is a far more closely integrated alliance than anything that has gone before; and the planned rapidity prescribed in its "war strategy" to meet any aggressive move from the Soviet Union is such that it is most unlikely that Parliaments in Europe or Congress in the United States will ever again have the opportunity to exercise their right of deciding whether or not to declare war. As members of NATO, individual states have, in effect, consented to waive their sovereign rights in certain eventualities, discussed and defined by them beforehand. Had they not done so, the value of the alliance as a system of security would have been sensibly diminished and its deterrent effect rendered worthless.

THE CONJUNCTURE of international relations, where individual states are subject to economic and security systems that operate across frontiers throughout the world, is sometimes called "Interdependence". The ability of states, or collections of states, to affect each other for better or worse is greater now than at previous periods of history, due to their close real proximity and to the delicate mechanisms of the world economy in which industrialised countries participate. The organisations mentioned above represent an attempt to institutionalise these interconnections, but interdependence can also be disagreeably expressed in the deliberate or accidental pressures exerted by some states on others (e.g. the Arab oil embargo of 1973 or the present American budgetary deficit, with its adverse effect on the economies of Western Europe). Such sudden damage can only be averted by appropriate international agreements, in which states renounce the use of their ability to damage others in return for reciprocal advantages.

Foreign Offices, therefore, as they survey the world of interdependence, must strive to palliate its disadvantages by creating orderly systems, within which no one state can decisively upset the apple-cart of another. The creation of such systems, however, implies the acceptance by individual countries of a diminution of sovereignty. It becomes the business of diplomacy to strike bargains in which the maximum advantage for one's own country is obtained in return for the acceptance of obligations which erode national control over an increasing number of areas of policy. Matters such as the level of tariffs and excise duties, industrial standards, transport regulations, environmental legislation—once purely domestic concerns—have been increasingly withdrawn from the domain of national sovereignty and governed by international agreements.

However, this evolution has had its paradoxical side. For whereas national governments' power to affect events has been diminished in practice by the condition of interdependence in which they find themselves, they are still perceived by their own citizens as exercising untrammelled sovereign authority, and independence is expected of them by those to whom they are answerable politically. Indeed Ministers of any government must strive to persuade their voters that they *are* acting independently, since any admission that they were no longer in control of events would damage the prestige, and hence the effectiveness, of the state itself. In domestic political terms the traditional use of foreign policy has been to attract support for governments whenever some dispute with another state justified an appeal to national solidarity. The diplomacy of interdependence is profoundly unsatisfying to national feeling. Consequently, its content has in it little that will strengthen governments against their political opponents or attract popular admiration and support. As between a concession in an international negotiation and a point of national advantage secured in return, it will always be the former which is perceived and publicised as a sign of "weakness" or "betrayal" of the national interest.

Thus the inhabitants of industrialised countries are presented with the uninspiring spectacle of their own state behaving "well" or "responsibly" in its conduct of international relations, displaying a virtue which, like that of Sade's *Justine*, constantly seems to bring with it misfortune and humiliation. This impression is all the more frustrating, since it contrasts with the "bad" behaviour of régimes in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, who never seem to have heard of "responsible" self-abnegation, but gladly continue on their path of chauvinism and paranoia, while dismissing as "colonialist" or "racist" those who object. The comparison is between those actors on the international scene who have something to lose and those who do not. But its existence adds to the frustration felt by the citizen who sees his own country as unjustly disadvantaged in attempts to sustain its own interests. Instances of sudden fierce riposte like the Falklands or the American bombing of Libya came as a relief to the pent-up feelings of many citizens of Britain and the United States.

THE GAP BETWEEN what is perceived and expected by public opinion when it looks abroad and the facts of a world which has become "one" in a disagreeably intrusive sense also accounts for the curiously contradictory attitudes of countries who participate in international or supranational organisations. For instance, member-states of the European Community, by the fact of their entry into it, have agreed to a number of policies being administered by the European Commission in Brussels; and, in addition, to certain other matters being decided within the Council of Ministers, sometimes by a qualified majority vote. None the less, the public holds their respective national governments responsible for the consequences of such decisions. National governments, in turn, try to excuse their concessions and tactical retreats by representing the course of the discussion as an intrepid, if vain, struggle against foreign foolishness. Every session of negotiation becomes in retrospect an adversary proceeding, since it is only in this way that political leaders can explain to their citizens how it came about that they were forced to accept decisions that were less than satisfactory from the national point of view. Moreover, Ministers can use the same tactics in reverse, invoking an inflamed public opinion to excuse their own unwillingness to compromise.

The real excuse for this seemingly hypocritical behaviour

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on the part of governments lies in the undoubted fact that it is they who effectively are still held responsible by the man-in-the-street even for decisions devolved upon a supranational body. That public opinion within the European Community should still look to national governments to justify measures taken within the Community institutions shows how small a psychological impact these have made. As long as individual governments have to bear the blame for policies decided in common, they will continue to shed some of the burden on to the backs of others by claiming that their representatives at the conference table were jostled, ambushed, or simply outnumbered.

PUBLIC FEELING that the government of the realm should enjoy absolute sovereignty and, consequently, be free to decide upon any course of action undiverted by external pressure, is in accordance with the traditional language of patriotism:

> *Come the three corners of the world in Armes,*
> *And we shall shocke them: Naught shall make us rue,*
> *If England to it selfe, do rest but true.*

It may be that such words no longer express the realities of an "Interdependent World". Nevertheless, the existence of such sentiments remains the foundation on which the national cohesion of states is based, even in the late 20th century.

Without that intuition of national identity, of an existence led in common and of government for the good of all, a state and its leaders would have no hold upon the affections of their people, no lever that could move them or rallying cry that could appeal to their emotions. A nation, said Burke, is "an idea of continuity which extends in time as well as in numbers and in space." Its existence, and that of the institutions developed to express its identity and carry on the business of government, is not the result of a rational decision of the kind that might establish a new tier of local government or delineate the boundaries of a national park. These things are created by history and nourished by time, gathering to themselves an ever-increasing charge of emotion, as habit and use over centuries impart to them a patina of affectionate familiarity.

But this emotional bond between state and citizen must also include assurance for the latter that the government to which he gives his loyalty is fulfilling its side of the bargain by taking his part against "others" and effectively resisting inroads on its own independence. Any confession of impotence on the part of government, any suspicion that it is bartering away the national interest to "foreigners"—those implicitly menacing, alien shapes beyond the frontiers—will dissolve the most strongly integrative element in the relationship between Citizen and State: the prestige of power. Governments need to appear to be in control of their management of domestic policy and foreign affairs. If some retreat is forced upon them, they must be seen to go fighting, rather than surrender tamely to the small print.

IT IS HERE, in the chasm between what an electorate expects of foreign relations and what it actually gets in an age of interdependence, that the difficulties of Foreign Ministries begin. Diplomats know that they cannot promise a series of victorious negotiations, and that the stance of the-boy-upon-the-burning-deck is inappropriate to a discussion of the level of tariffs on women's knitted dresses or quotaed imports of men's "unstructured" suits. In Yorkshire, however, where woollen textile manufacturers are conscious that their own floor-boards may soon be alight, hopping up and down about such matters is normal practice. It is sympathetic agitation that they expect from Ministers and from trade negotiators. So, as those negotiators leave the conference room, there will be "strong" statements about "unacceptable attitudes" and "national aggrandisement" on the part of the other side—statements which mean little enough and may, indeed, have an adverse effect on the end-result of the bargaining.

IN INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATIONS the Foreign Office will have its face turned towards overseas opinion and the nuances of diplomatic success, while the Prime Minister's office will keep its eye firmly on the requirements of public opinion. The diplomats will be concerned with the realities of a world where success is only attainable by renouncing victory. The politicians will be preoccupied with the need to live up to the expectations of a public nourished on a myth of undiminished sovereignty. Naturally, these opposed perspectives do not improve relations between Foreign Ministries and the rest of government. From taking a realistic view of the outside world to being accused of spinelessness and pessimism is a short step, as many officials have discovered (not least those who served President de Gaulle).[8]

Diplomats have, indeed, an ungrateful role. Miserable priests of interdependence, they are condemned to bring ill news to the ears of power, reminding politicians of their limitations. They are compelled to point out the restricted possibilities of diplomatic action to a public opinion whose demand is for activity and a resounding vindication of independent sovereignty. The message they bear is one of decreased national power and increased international obligations, which now stretch their tentacles into the jealously guarded domains of domestic policy. It is no wonder, therefore, if their unwelcome communications are rejected or written off as stemming from lack of moral fibre by those responsible for the political direction of governments.

It is not only in London that relations between the Prime Minister's office and the Foreign Office have had their

[8] As early as April 1945, de Gaulle had warned his Foreign Minster, Georges Bidault (about to represent France at the San Francisco conference), against the Quai d'Orsay's "desire to agree with their partners and, as they say, to reach a result."

However, when de Gaulle came to power in 1958 French Foreign Ministry officials were able to convince him to put into effect the Treaty of Rome, despite his disapproval of a supranational Europe. To his enquiry as to what remained of his "German policy", the unanimous reply was "*Rien, mon Général!*"

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moments of tension. President Reagan's recent ill-starred attempts to construct a do-it-yourself foreign policy out of materials supplied by Marine officers and an Admiral in the National Security Council indicate, among other things, his distrust of the State Department's instincts. President Mitterrand too, by denying his Foreign Minister a seat at a recent European "summit" meeting, revealed the low level of his esteem for the Quai d'Orsay.

The practice of foreign policy once served the purposes of rulers as a means through which they could increase their prestige and rally opinion to them in response to an external threat. The reverse is now the case. International relations has become an arena in which well-publicised defeat tends to outweigh discreet success. Governments face the disagreeable alternative of either publicly accepting responsibility for failure or else of presenting the real world beyond their frontiers in a mist of patriotic rhetoric. For if they were to confess that these matters are beyond their control, then what would become of that mystery of power, the *arcanum imperii*, which gives cohesion and prestige to the existence of the state?

I BEGAN by pointing to the decline of Foreign Offices both in terms of the style in which Ambassadors approach the task of exerting influence on the countries to which they are accredited, and in terms of the place occupied by Foreign Ministries within the hierarchies of government. Yet the description that I have given of the reasons for constant misunderstanding between domestic opinion and diplomatic expertise might suggest that the latter plays a rather more important role and enjoys rather more real power than is generally appreciated.

For Foreign Offices are the interpreters to governments of the world of interdependence. They can point out the constraints imposed by international obligations and the consequences of ignoring them. They are the familiars of a web in which Cabinet Ministers, if left to themselves, would soon become entangled, bemused as they are by party programmes and rhetoric. The truths the experts enunciate may be disagreeable, but they remain truths.

Paradoxically, the main role of diplomats now seems to be the exercise of persuasion on their masters at home rather than on the governments to which they are accredited. Unlike "the great Elchi", they no longer batter on the doors of the Seraglio or of the Niavaran Palace in Tehran—but, back in the corridors of bureaucratic power, they can act as the initiates to an age of half-independence and mitigated sovereignty. This is a task which earns them little thanks from frustrated Ministers or the officials of domestic ministries who discover with horror a new and complicated dimension to their work. It is a thankless enough role, but it is not an insignificant one. It is also the justification of the importance attached to political reporting.

The paradox is, though, that the message of the diplomats does little to serve the political cohesion of the society to which it is directed. In their irritation about advice which conveys the scanty nature of the Emperor's clothes, politicians are defending fictions necessary to the perpetuation of the myth of government. Theirs is a game of "Let's pretend" whose rules forbid admissions of impotence. Let's pretend that we can release hostages, emulate Superpowers, ensure by our judicious rebukes that the South African government starts dismantling *Apartheid*. Let's pretend that we are free to act in a theatre of foreign policy, where the hero rescues the princess and disposes of the alien dragon to the applause of an audience of admiring citizens.

"Too black-and-white", a critic might say, but how much more inspiriting for national morale, how much more *useful*, than the incomprehensible shades of grey in which the world of interdependence is coloured.

No wonder that the messages of Foreign Ministries fall dully upon the ears of political leaders. No wonder that they react with hostility to this intrusion of reality into their delicious *rêveries* of absolute sovereignty. In this too they are at one with their peoples, who yearn for the simplicities of Commandos and "Argies". *Le coeur a ses raisons . . .*, and the politician is just the man to indulge it.

As for the diplomats, they must continue their dance through the reasonable maze of interdependence. Screened by its opaque thickets, they are at least lost to view.

Darya at La Salève, France

After a breathless ascent by cable-car
we found slow summer burning itself out
through the forest we had to skirt
to reach the arête and the peak.
It was hard going with rock, briar and burr,
ankles and ribs twisting round and forward
on winding paths strewn with cicadas
tricking us up and on to the plain.

Before the twilight began to blossom
and the air cooled, you drank
white wine at an open air inn,
its balcony, overlooking lake and valley,
drawing us down to retrace our way
back to the flight of stone steps
leading interminably lower along
the edge of the incline towards the border.

Every ledge was chipped and peeled as you hopped
on down that precarious, precipitous slope
with stick and mincing Chaplin gait
delighting the friend beside you
with such brinkmanship
and the unerring sense of comedy that possesses you
on cloudless mountain days like these
overflowing with silence—above Avernus.

J. F. Hendry

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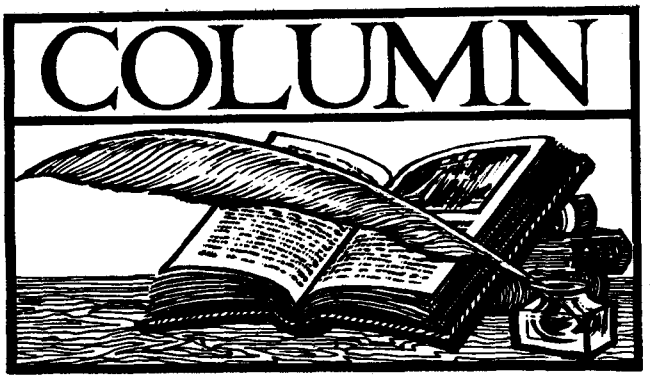

HATE MAIL is a risk you run if you write or broadcast. I've had my small share—often after appearing on the BBC's *Critics' Forum*, which used to be plagued by an eccentric correspondent in Poole. Once, I got it in the neck for lampooning someone in a Lewis Carroll parody. That I probably deserved. But recently, having praised in print Claude Lanzmann's death-camp film *Shoah*, I received my first *anonymous* letter. Poorly typed on scruffy paper, it berated me for believing that Hitler had applied his "Final Solution" to the Jews. I was the dupe, it seemed, of a Jewish conspiracy: I should read some books which would put me wise.

I didn't reply: there was no sender's address. If I had, I'd simply have cited the 42 volumes of Nuremberg trial proceedings, or the memoirs of the Auschwitz commandant. But I must admit that I was startled—less by the tone of the letter, which was temperate, than by the contrast between its placid syntax and its lunatic assertions. When someone ignores mountains of evidence, pins his faith on folly, and still apes rationality, the atmosphere turns creepy. We prefer our madmen to look the part.

Not that research or scholarship would ever convert a flat-earther, a solipsist, or someone convinced that Nazi genocide was a Jewish myth. Sail a flat-earther round the world in the Whitbread race, and he'd claim you'd changed course while he was sleeping. Harangue a solipsist, and you'd still be a mere figment of his imagination. Show the bone-mill newsreels to a hidebound disbeliever in the Holocaust, and he'd credit the film to Pinewood's special effects. There's no point in arguing with the mentally deaf.

What also surprises me is how long such arguments have continued. More than 40 years after the end of World War II, its images still haunt us. Picture-books of *Wehrmacht* uniforms still sell in specialist shops; comedians still use fake Cherman excents; war films are re-run on British television; and in Germany itself the post-War self-questioning—understandably delayed—has lately become even more intense. The Nazis' twelve years left a deep burn on our consciousness, and we're still applying the acriflavin.

One of those most busy about the wound is the British writer and television producer Tom Bower. Born after World War II, he grew up to believe that it was:

> "a just and moral crusade, ending in the victory of righteousness over tyranny. By the time I entered my teens I had read every book in my local library which told of the heroism of those who fought in the struggle against Nazism. The image of the sacrifice of those who died in that struggle has always haunted me; for many it was the outcome of reasoned consideration and a determination to fight for the principles that they believed in. Among those principles, especially for those who fought a longer and grimmer war in the occupied countries, was the belief that with victory would come justice: those who had done evil would be punished, and those who had died would be avenged."

That, from the Preface to Bower's first book, *Blind Eye to Murder* (1981), is no doubt deliberately simplistic. Some of the first War memoirs, especially by British agents, were indeed blood-and-thunder yarns as exciting—and misleading—as Hollywood films. No one involved in the War, and no one reflecting seriously on it, could surely believe that it was simply a crusade—or that any crusade ever is. Concealed cowardice, cruelty, dissension, duplicity, mistakes, carelessness, stupidity, and mixed motives all qualified the pure image of "righteousness"; and "tyranny" too, though often black-uniformed, was not uniformly black. The War *was* just and moral; the heroism and the sacrifices were real. But only for rhetorical purposes could it seem worth while to gloss over the ethical complications.

Tom Bower's purpose, in that pioneering book, was to contrast Allied propaganda with Allied negligence in failing to hunt down and punish large numbers of war criminals less prominent than those in the dock at the first Nuremberg trial. They included doctors, lawyers, bureaucrats, academics, and industrialists. In his second book, *Klaus Barbie: Butcher of Lyons* (1984), he unearthed a still more discreditable story: how Barbie, the brutal interrogator and probable killer of Jean Moulin, had escaped to affluence in Bolivia with the alleged connivance of misguided American intelligence officers.

NOW, IN *The Paperclip Conspiracy*,[1] Bower tracks more exalted quarry: the scientists and technicians whom the Allies actively sought to recruit from the ruins of Nazi Germany, for use in weapons and space programmes of their own. Those in demand were identified, by the Americans, with an ordinary paperclip slipped on to each one's personal file.

Several previous writers have described *Project Paperclip*, but none in such detail or with so much recourse to recently opened archives. Bower has further fleshed out his story with glimpses of wartime and pre-War unpreparedness in Britain and America. At times, these summaries of familiar technical and strategic failings seem factitiously grafted on: several sections end with narrative signposts like: "this belated awakening was the source of Britain's eventual plan to plunder the enemy's store of technical and scientific knowledge."

In fact, Bower's reminders of past complacency need no such excuse. By comparison with some pre-War boneheads, Ethelred the Unready was a boy scout. A 1936 British

[1] *The Paperclip Conspiracy: The Battle for the Spoils and Secrets of Nazi Germany*. By TOM BOWER. Michael Joseph, £14.95.

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Army training manual divided the cavalry into "horsed" and "mechanised" detachments. It went on:

> "Mounted drill (in armoured cars) is based on the same principles as that of Cavalry. The principles of training in field operations given in Cavalry training (horsed) are, in general, applicable to Armoured Car Regiments. . . ."

In the following year, Hitler invited the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Sir Cyril Deverell, to watch combined air and ground exercises by 150,000 troops and parachutists, over 1,000 tanks and anti-tank vehicles, and wave after wave of dive-bombers. "They look upon us", Deverell smugly reported, "as the authority on the use of tanks." Even as late as 1943, confronted by evidence of German advances in developing jet aircraft, Air Vice-Chief Marshal Sir Wilfred Freeman wrote to Air Marshal Sir Charles Portal: "We must be careful to avoid exciting the uninitiated about this sort of thing."

Bower's account of how the uninitiated reacted to Hitler's V1 and V2 rockets seems to me to betray his youth. On the V1 "pilotless planes" over London he writes: "The capital, which had enjoyed relative peace since the Blitz three years earlier, reacted in terror to the new crisis." Not in my recollection. Nicknaming the new weapons "doodlebugs", people watched them as they waddled overhead, waiting with concern and interest, but not panic, for the engines to cut out. "Londoners were petrified"? Come off it, chum.

There are one or two other minor errors. "Duncan" Curtis, described as a naval officer with experience in special operations, I take to be Dunstan Curtis, an old friend and colleague who later became Deputy Secretary-General of the Council of Europe. Nor, I think, is it fair to describe the Foreign Office's Con O'Neill (here misspelt "O'Neil") as "enigmatic", and accuse him of anti-Semitism on the strength of half a sentence quoted out of context. Whoever compiled the index, too, needs his headings examined: the catchwords omit innumerable names.

VERIFIABLE MISTAKES weaken confidence in matters harder to check. Should historians' accounts of their sources be audited, like company finances? An impossible task. So I'll take on trust Tom Bower's tales from the archives: they simply document, in immense detail, much that's been suspected, known, and in part reported already. Yes, Allied attitudes were ambivalent; yes, war criminals did escape; yes, German scientists were recruited by the Russians, the Americans, and the British; yes, the West did encourage economic resurgence in what became the *Bundesrepublik*. Thanks to Bower's efforts, we now know much more about this whole chequered process. But how much of it, *pace* Bower, was morally wrong?

Take, first, "de-Nazification". At every level, it involved fine distinctions. Even among Nazi Party members, lines had to be drawn. Was a founder-member, recruited as an idealist, worse than someone who'd joined when the Party's nature was better known? How did either compare with *ex officio* Nazis, signing on simply to preserve their jobs? Were *Wehrmacht* conscripts invariably less guilty than patriotic volunteers? Such questions in no way invalidated the hunt for war criminals; but they necessitated skill, experience, and man-hours.

All of those were in short supply. Able German-speaking interrogators, legally trained judges, even file cards and typewriters were sometimes lacking. Most precious of all was time. Keeping order, repatriating Allied prisoners-of-war, feeding and housing "displaced persons" and refugees of every nationality, tending the sick and wounded, maintaining public health—these were tasks at least as urgent as punishment or revenge. And later, as Soviet policy became clearer, Western self-interest dictated other priorities too.

Tom Bower himself tells a revealing story from 1944:

> "In July, as the Red Army advanced towards the Blizna missile centre, Churchill cabled Stalin asking him, in the interests of Allied co-operation, to allow inspection of the centre by a joint British-American team of specialists. Permission was granted for Colonel Terence Sanders from the Ministry of Supply and the American Colonel John O'Mara, together with an assortment of experts, to travel circuitously to Moscow and onwards to Poland. On their arrival, on 19 August, Sanders and O'Mara were told by Soviet generals that Blizna was still in German hands, although the site had in fact been captured two weeks earlier. Suspicious but helpless, the team finally arrived at Blizna on 2 September to discover that the Russians were unprepared to share their own plunder. Nevertheless, members of the mission were able to pack what remained of the rocket debris into crates. But when they opened them in London, they found that the crates contained rusting aircraft parts. Russian policy for the plunder of Germany had been eloquently revealed."

It's against this background that Allied competition for the services of German scientists has to be judged. Bower, as if addressing a jury, puts his thoughts in the form of questions. Should the imported expertise have gone so exclusively into military and space programmes? Was it right to keep the strategy under wraps? Was the moral cost of *Project Paperclip* too high? The crescendo of his queries makes his implied verdict pretty clear.

MYSELF, I'M FAR less certain. Without the *Paperclip* team, as Bower admits, "the American space programme would have been greatly delayed". And even if moon landings leave you cold, how should we have felt—and fared—if the same team had been whisked off to Moscow?

More fundamentally, how should the Western Allies have treated post-War Federal Germany?

> "Many believe [writes Bower] that West Germany's meteoric rise to riches was entirely due to the introduction of the new currency, the Deutschmark. But the myth was born of ignorance of what had occurred beyond the view of the public. The truth is substantially more sinister. In Washington a number of officials expected the resurgence of German industry, but only Samuel Klaus and a few sympathisers had wanted to prevent it and they had failed

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for a series of reasons. Within Germany, the early schemes of the American military government to destroy the masonic industrial cartels had been curbed as a result of unrelenting political, commercial and diplomatic pressure from Congress, New York bankers, and the British government. . . ."

Apart from unduly devaluing Erhard's crucial currency reform, this seems to me riddled with erroneous assumptions. On a purely prudential level, J. M. Keynes's *Economic Consequences of the Peace* had long ago demonstrated the dangers of any attempt to "squeeze Germany till the pips squeak". Churchill, after a brief aberration, had rejected the Morgenthau Plan for pastoralising Germany because "England would be chained to a dead body". Attlee imposed bread rationing in Britain to feed the Germans. And Jean Monnet persuaded successive French and other Governments that the only safe course was to offer Germany an equal place in a uniting Western Europe.

When scotching Morgenthau, moreover, Churchill had added: "I agree with Burke. You cannot indict a whole nation." And this, surely, was the central point. How should victorious democracies treat a population liberated from its native dictators? The implication in much of what Bower writes is that the Allies should have stressed punishment more than reform. Few penologists would take that view; and one great Western success story was the restoration of democracy in the Federal Republic. Magnanimity took courage. When Victor Gollancz drew attention to the plight of ordinary Germans after the War, and even dared point out that a number of gentile Germans were among the victims at Buchenwald, he drew a small torrent of hate mail.

Against it, however, some shining exceptions stood out. One came "as from Trinity College, Cambridge".

"I am deeply in sympathy", it declared, "with your severe criticism (and it cannot be too severe) of the cruelty, meanness and vulgarity of the daily press and of the BBC. (Our cinema news reels are, if possible, more poisonous still.)" The writer went on to criticise—as who would not?—Gollancz's tendency to go on and on and over the top. He concluded, characteristically:

> "If this letter sounds impolite, this is not because it was my intention to be offensive, but because I have such difficulties in writing at all clearly that the additional task of expressing myself politely would have made it impossible for me to write at all."

Gollancz answered, rather crossly: "Thank you for your letter, which I am sure was very well meant."

He was probably unaware who his correspondent was. He misspelt the name as "L. Wiltgenstein, Esq." Would that all letters of disagreement came from such distinguished pens.

M

House of Fish

It has spaghutti and cuecomber
but no fish. There are obscure
signs: "Sary's Botique—Desing Mode",
"Sportsware—Fabrick of Candles".

Observing these, I ask for fish,
but the muscles are tomorrow, the squid
yesterday, the hake maybe soon.
I fork up spaghutti in the neon light.

Soberly, a Scotsman reading a sociological
tome pukes on the terrace. An English girl,
with breasts peering through her sideless
beach shirt, for no reason grins—

and the waiter claps her with his dark eyes.
You are mad, he tells me. You come for sun
but it hails (how you say it?) like cobwebs
and you come for fish, but suck spaghutti

in your cold trouser. Yes, I been to Luton—
serve cheeps at airport, damn bad.
And on this cue a fangless Spaniard
(donkey toppling with basket of junk)

chirrups through a plastic bird.
The night is young, but I shall go back
to my balcony, and listen to hotels
thumping the punch-drunk clouds.

Alan Harris

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Anna Adams

Time's Ambush

I

Encyclopaedia Britannica,
Fourteenth edition, nineteen-twenty-nine,
arrived when I was four. Its packing-case
was made into a dolls' house; that was mine.
The books were for our father's use.

A to Anno, Annus, Balt to Brai.

Green volumes, heavy with profundities
on flimsy India paper—Brai to Cast—
proved dull to read, and large for my small knees.
I liked the photographs of statues best:
old marble Greeks with marble penises.

Cast to Cole to Dama and Educ.

I should have read the small print, might have learned
to know beforehand what I knew too late.
Educ for Education might have warned—
Extr to Game—but prescience helps fate,
avoidance leads us to what lies in wait.

Gunn, Jere, Libe, Libi, Mary, Mus.

My sister Mary plucked the lotus Mus
for Music. Mus to Ozon, P to Plan:
I lacked a plan—Rayn Sarr—time's Sorcerers
concealed their Sordid Texts from both of us
through Text to Vasc, and still I could not guess

time's present hidden in the final one.

Atlas and Index. On the English map
of roads and towns and villages, a word
adorned a spot stuck to a railway line,
and near that village station a green road
led to a house predestined to be mine

for even then it bore my maiden name.

II

If, then, I could have used a magic lens
or been God's pupil, a creative eye,
so probed into the crevices of paper
and animated printed words and signs,
I would have seen this drumlinned valley, slung
between its limestone hills on that flat map,
with farms linked by a skein of narrow lanes.

I would have seen those flyspecks on pale green,
those minute rectangles, as houses, barns
and scattered villages, inhabited
by map-mites that, when magnified, proved men

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and horses, sheep and cattle, dogs and stones
and round-armed women, laid now with the dead,
running to save dry washing from the rain.

Late-lying bones beneath the quilted green
communal counterpane strode easily
upright along the lanes, or caught their horses,
harnessing them to carts to drive to town
on market-days, and some came tipsily
home to this house: but all past time took place
elsewhere in space. Creation spirals on

and brings me to this April among hills
much like the ones concealed in that old map
when it was new and folded among books
on our suburban shelves. Along stone walls,
snowdrifts define enclosures: Ulmber, Stripe,
Great Outiber and Thistle Bottom, Crooks
and Dunnyworth; all drawn with long white strokes.

Under a clouded moon the pale drifts gleam
luminous as clock-hands on the dial
of Ribblesdale: dish with a broken rim;
they signal change in cursive Arabic
or Greek. I read their cyphers in the dark,
sensing, underneath the diagram,
the wound-up spring of Spring, changing the clock.

John Gohorry

Charade

It is either an early retirement or a long service award
for the Word Manager this morning at 7 a.m.;
he is supine, still crashed out from the night before,
still sleeping it off under the continental quilt
with the Food Manager in her black nightdress.
The M.D. comes down in his towelling stretch-suit,
a moon and stars embroidered above his left breast,
flourishing awards from the side-table. *Glasses*,
he booms, and then, *Clock*, in stentorian fashion,
leaning across the Food Manager to make the presentation.

The recipient gratefully straps on the black wristwatch,
pokes the spectacles on to his nose, smiles, lost for words.
Downstairs, the M.D. wants his garage and best cars
arranged properly on the plastic tray. *Civilisation*,
he shouts. The Word Manager sneezes hard, and the Deputy M.D.
bursts into tears at the sudden explosion. The Food Manager
positions the Rolls and the D.B.7 by the open doors
of the garage. The M.D. selects one. *Civilisation*,
he bellows again, and then, *When the saints go marching in*.
The Rolls and the D.B.7 glide through the blue doorways.

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NOTES & TOPICS

Paris Notebook

By Jean-François Revel

The Varieties of Corruption

OUR RECENT scandal over the French charity organisation *Carrefour du Développement* reminds us that one of the dangers that threaten democracy is simple corruption. It happens that this particular case involves only a crude, almost primitive form of corruption, the misappropriation of public money. But in a legalistic Leviathan State the citizens can be robbed by subtler methods which skate cleverly over the surface of the penal code without falling in. In a civilised, efficiently alert democracy, you have to be a fool to commit the major felonies punishable by the law: breach of trust, peculation, embezzlement, influence-peddling. So in order to gauge the extent of corruption in our own kinds of liberal society, we need to look beyond the classic offences.

Being "corrupt" means somehow misapplying political or administrative power, whether directly or indirectly, outside its proper sphere, for one's own financial or material advantage or in order to distribute the gains among one's friends, colleagues, relations, or supporters. When a Minister grants a subvention to an association of dubious utility, even when he observes all the rules in doing so, he is committing an abuse, especially if it turns out that the beneficiaries of the subvention are his personal or political friends. A subvention of a million francs, for example, is the equivalent of a year's profits for a thriving business. Multiplied by some thousands of instances (and by sums mostly very much greater), this act amounts to a levy imposed on the labours of the producers, in favour of the occupants of the power structure. The further the system extends, the heavier the hidden tax on production and the less profit and employment. Even if legal appearances are saved in these transactions, it may be assumed that democracy is not. The national inheritance is diverted into private or partisan uses, causing a pernicious drain on the general economy. No doubt the good Minister who performs this little service for his henchmen has no sense of being dishonest—and that is the most serious thing about it.

The spectacle of the vast majority of societies past and present teaches that corruption is endemic among them, and is seldom viewed as an anomaly. Even in the case of the Roman Republic in the second century BC—the period which so many historians have built up as a model of the *vertu* beloved of Montesquieu—Sallust informs us in his *Bellum Jugurthinum*, without batting an eye, that nearly all the members of that august body, the Roman Senate, were for sale. The main political system in which corruption is explicitly regarded as a cause for shame is liberal democracy, though even there it has not been completely eradicated. Nevertheless there have at least been steps to prevent, detect, and punish its appearance. All the same, a man like Kakuei Tanaka, convicted of peculation in the Tokyo Lockheed affair and obliged to resign his post as Prime Minister in 1976, has remained the most influential politician in Japan.

Although it is an ever-present threat in the democracies, in a thousand new and ingenious guises, corruption is still not the heart of the system. Almost everywhere else, unfortunately, it is: it thrives in many Third World countries and all over the Communist world. In the Third World the corruption among political leaders and civil servants is one of the main obstacles to development, no matter how great the scale of investment and aid, and in some cases the rate of growth.

Some countries that enjoy rapid growth, like Mexico or Nigeria, still find themselves in a state of bankruptcy for reasons among which corruption counts high. That is because it rots the vital tissues well beyond the immediate zones of illicit levies, bribery, and embezzlement of public funds. The point is reached at which it is no longer a matter merely of corruption profiting from the economy, but of an economy conceived and directed for the purpose of corruption. The Philippines under Marcos provide an accurate illustration of such a system, which may be found less publicly displayed, but equally insidious, in all sorts of countries, no matter what their political orientation.

HOW A WHOLE ECONOMY may be debased in this way, and how the life of a whole nation may be indirectly disrupted, is demonstrated by an example taken from the little-known area of trade-union corruption. The powerful Mexican trade-unions have the monopoly of hiring labour. A non-union worker cannot find work in Mexico because no employer will dare to take him on, for fear of reprisals. By the same token, no unionised worker ever stays unemployed for long. But in order to be unionised he has to pay the union's officials bribes which may amount to several years' wages. For those who can afford it, it is an investment. For those who cannot, it means exclusion from the labour market and permanent poverty.

No one who is ignorant of that fact can possibly understand anything about the causes of the flood of emigrant Mexican labour—nearly all of it illegal—which has been pouring across the Rio Grande for decades, whatever the economic climate, in search of jobs in the United States. Some of this emigration derives from the natural attraction exerted by the richer

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country on the work force of the poorer. But the greater part of it arises from Mexico's trade-union practices, in other words from corruption. And we are dealing here with a colossal migratory shift, involving expensive imbalances for both Mexico and the United States, and a running and unsolved dispute between the two governments.

Gunnar Myrdal, the famous economist and Third World expert (winner of the Nobel Prize for economics in 1974, and a leading light in the Swedish Socialist Party) wrote this in his *Asian Drama* (1968), about South-west Asia:

> "As a research subject corruption is almost taboo there. It is seldom mentioned in serious debates about political leadership or economic planning. Even Western experts display a partiality which has assumed the dimensions of subordination of research to diplomacy. Sociologists, whether they belong to the Right or to the Left, evade these awkward questions."

That is because neither the experts nor the officials within international organisations would keep their jobs for very long if they started to include corruption in their calculations as one of the factors of the Third World's stubborn poverty. The political leaders who would have to be accused are the very same who control the majority vote in these international organisations.

So why be surprised that the representatives of UN agencies meekly consent even to such horrors as the Ethiopian atrocities? What indulgence has been shown to the Addis Ababa authorities who misappropriated international aid in the midst of famine, and moved whole populations in conditions which have caused 100,000-150,000 deaths! Likewise, we observe how vociferously African governments rose up in protest against those non-governmental organisations which set out to deliver their aid in kind, and directly to the people. Really! What next! No, say official circles, aid must be delivered in cash, to the proper political and governmental departments.

IF THIRD WORLD CORRUPTION prevents the economy from working, in Communist countries it is the other way round. Only corruption saves them from suffocation, or rather, it is only that part of the economy where corruption rules that shows much sign of working. In fact, there are two kinds of corruption under Communism: the institutional corruption of the leaders of the single Party, and the use of the Black Economy by the people at large (which, naturally, includes the payment of bribes to officials to obtain promotions).

The total involvement of the political with the economic, added to the penury created by this very situation, makes corruption unavoidable, for the strong as well as the weak, for the profiteers as well as the exploited. In 1964, Khrushchev was deposed by his peers for trying to deprive the dignitaries of their main source of revenue by withdrawing various appointments enabling them to loot by tacit privilege.

In 1976 Ilya Zemtsov—a former member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan, and a recent emigrant to Israel—brought out his classic *De la corruption en Union Soviétique* (published by Hachette), a changeless picture of the rottenness of the system and of the rare and futile efforts to clean it out. In 1986 the Moscow Party chief, Elstine, a "Gorbachovian", publicly declared that "filth must be thoroughly uprooted", without seeming any more aware than his predecessors of the impossibility of doing the job without changing the nature of the régime. Thus, the clean-up campaigns usually tend (as we see nowadays in China) to justify the political execution of an opponent or rival group, rather than to impose integrity on all and eliminate the general causes of corruption.

THE GREATER THE ROLE of the State, the more numerous the opportunities for corruption. This relationship recurs in every era. Michael Rostovtzeff, in his standard *Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire* (1926), explains how under Constantine the vital principle in the making of fortunes

> "was no longer creative energy, the discovery and exploitation of new sources of wealth, or the improvement and development of agricultural, industrial and commercial enterprises. It was *the shrewd exploitation of a position of privilege in the State*, so as to plunder both people and State together."

Plundering the people is possible even in an advanced democracy by a thousand roundabout means: research departments whose sole purpose is to cash phoney invoices; municipal jobs for Party stalwarts; unneccessary appointments. In this respect, the local government or the regionalisation of political power, in itself a commendable thing, increases the opportunities for peculation or toadyism.

This has to be recognised, and appropriate precautions adopted. In France, it means reviewing, not the legislation on charities, which guarantees a basic liberty, but the criteria by which they may be subsidised, in the absence of any supervision. This constitutes a breach through which billions of francs' worth of public money gushes out towards sinecures and parties, on noble humanitarian, social, and cultural pretexts. The recent report by the Office of the *Inspection des finances* on the Club TF1, an association created in 1985 by the board of TF1, with a budget of five to ten million francs whose use is reportedly subject to no precise system of accounting, throws light on what is only the most recent of a host of abuses. It is not long since a major scandal broke out in Spain, provoked by the irregular and very profitable concession to some important members of the Socialist Party (and their families) of franchises on fifteen or so ticket outlets for the National Lottery.

THERE ARE two main types of corruption. The first, which afflicts liberal régimes in particular, stems from the possibility of collaboration between political power and business: invitations to tender bids; State markets; the waiving of laws or regulations; fiscal exemptions and various subventions—these form the sphere of collusion. The more interventionist and centralist the State, the greater the risk of its occurrence.

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The second type of corruption is more common in collectivist or widely nationalised systems, in which State property and the national patrimony blur and overlap. In his statement of 14 July 1986, François Mitterrand defended the conception that only that part of the national wealth that is the property of the State really "belongs" to the community. It is a dangerous philosophy, because it tends to legitimise the use of State power, in all good faith, to distribute public money in the form of preferential appointments, subventions, or sinecures. Not that either of the two types of corruption totally excludes the other. They combine in different proportions according to the dominant tendency of the régime.

In Spain and France alike, it is true, the socialists have so lofty a notion of their own morality that if you listen to what they say you might almost believe they make corruption respectable when they practise it—rather than finding their virtue tarnished when they succumb. . . .

Corruption increases in inverse proportion to democracy. Neither the recent public scandals in France, nor those which are not yet public (and perhaps never will be), could have happened if the balances and reciprocal control and supervision of power had been working properly. Where democracy does not exist, corruption is one of the most intractable hindrances to its birth and growth. Where democracy does exist, corruption is one of the most pernicious methods of undermining it.

Malign, or Muddle-Headed . . . ?

A Footnote to the Case of Mgr Bruce Kent—By JOHN HACKETT

IN JULY last year a dear friend died. He was a surgeon, widely respected and loved: his name was Lipmann Kessel. I know of others deeply indebted to Lippy, whose skills were to bring him, as a Professor at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital, high distinction among the surgeons of our time, both at home and abroad, and whose modesty and kindness made him many warm friends. I have myself a more than usually strong reason to hold him in high regard. He gave me more than 40 years of life.

I was brought in to St Elizabeth's Hospital in Arnhem, as our doomed battle dragged on through its last throes, with severe abdominal injuries. A German *SS*-surgeon, working in that confused situation with the RAMC Captain, Lipmann Kessel, advised him that I was beyond hope. Lippy disregarded his advice and, after what has been described as a surgical miracle, I lived. Months later, in the harsh winter of 1944-45, we were to meet again, in snow-bound woods, on the run in German-occupied Holland, to make our stealthy way together out of it.

Though very different persons, he and I developed after the War a friendship too close to be affected by any differences between us. Lippy, an Afrikaner and a Jew, was also a Marxist. I was none of these. Indeed, I had for many years made no secret of my view that Marxism, though once useful, could no longer be seen as anything but unscientific, romantic and obsolete. Lippy envied me my Christian faith but regretted that he could not share it. There were other differences. He was a member of Ex-Services CND and had for some years been chairman of its medical committee. However worthy the motives of many (though by no means all) of those who joined CND, and however they regarded it themselves, it seemed to me (like so many other so-called "Peace Movements") to be little more than a useful tool of Soviet foreign policy. Lippy and I, however, never talked about these things. . . .

A TV company once tried to set up a confrontation between us as "interesting television". We were absolutely firm in our refusal to discuss before a million viewers topics we had never wished to talk about in private. The respect and admiration I had for this devoted, skilful, gentle, compassionate man was unbounded. We were happy in our friendship and did not want it disturbed.

What I am writing about now, however, is not so much Lippy, and our friendship, as the interesting position of Monsignor Bruce Kent. It is about Bruce Kent that the question that heads this piece arises.

When Lippy died I had a letter from the President of Ex-Services CND, John Stanleigh, a former member of one of the finest fighting units in British Airborne Forces, "Boy" Wilson's 21st Independent Parachute Company. We had fought alongside each other in the Oosterbeek perimeter. It seems that copies of his letter to me and my reply were sent off to Monsignor Bruce Kent, who then wrote back in his turn

GENERAL SIR JOHN HACKETT, *after a distinguished military career (GOC-in-C Northern Ireland Command; Deputy Chief of the General Staff, Ministry of Defence; Commander in Chief British Army of the Rhine), was from 1968-75 Principal of King's College, London, and continues there as a Visiting Professor in Classics. He is the author of "The Profession of Arms" (n.e. Sidgwick & Jackson, 1984) and "I Was a Stranger" (Chatto & Windus, 1977), and co-author of "The Untold Story" and "The Third World War" (Sidgwick & Jackson, 1982, 1978).*

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to John Stanleigh, and kindly sent me a copy of his reply "with good wishes" from "Bruce". I have the permission of the other two to quote them, and now reproduce relevant parts of all three letters. The letter from Monsignor Bruce Kent to the President of Ex-Services CND deserves close attention.

From the President, Ex-Services CND

4 August 1986

DEAR SIR JOHN,

As you know, Lipman Kessel, one of our distinguished Vice-Presidents, passed away last month. As a fitting gesture, we should like to publish an obituary in our next (quarterly) Newsletter from someone who knew him well.

I understand that Lipman Kessel was your friend for many, many years and I thought you might kindly agree to provide us with this last tribute.

I appreciate that you did not share his views about nuclear arms and we would, of coure, make it clear to our readers that your contribution should not be construed in any way as an endorsement of our objectives.

Yours sincerely,
John Stanleigh
(formerly 21 Indep. Para. Coy—Boy Wilson)

Reply from General Sir John Hackett

12 August 1986

DEAR STANLEIGH,

I was pleased to be in contact with a former member of that quite outstanding body of fighting men commanded by my very old friend Boy Wilson. I assume you were in the Arnhem encounter and if you were a member of that group from the Independent Para. Company which fought so stoutly on the eastern sector of the Oosterbeek perimeter you would then have been, at least nominally, under my command. I saw a lot of Boy at that time and was full of admiration for that Company. They were splendid people.

I find your request a difficult one to answer. I owe my life to Lippy but make no secret of my own lack of enthusiasm for what I can only regard, at its best, as the high-minded folly of CND. Much of the support it gets, as you must know, is not high-minded at all. The enthusiasm with which Communists in this country, of varying shades from the CPGB outwards and downwards, claim to have more or less taken CND over says really all that needs to be said. Whether the claim is well based is perhaps open to question. It is certainly, as you know, widely put forward by Communists and rarely refuted. I know the Christian priest Bruce Kent quite well and, contrary to the views held by many respected and responsible people, see him less as malign than muddle-headed. What your own views on this matter may be, particularly in respect of the wholehearted support by CND of aspects of the foreign policy pursued by the anti-Christian USSR, I do not know. I shall have to think a little more about your invitation to contribute to your next newsletter. Perhaps you will let me know what your deadline is and what sort of length you would expect me to produce.

Yours sincerely,
J. W. Hackett

Monsignor Bruce Kent to John Stanleigh, CND

5th September 1987 [*sic*]

DEAR JOHN,

. . . I am sorry that you could not get John Hackett to write a few lines about dear Lippy.

Contrary to the views held by many respectable and responsible persons John is really a decent chap and was once an above average college principal. It is just that like many retired military people he always goes on fighting the war before last and actually believes nuclear weapons have some military purpose. All contrary views he is obliged to regard as symptoms of a subversive conspiracy, so obvious that any evidence for it is not necessary.

Yours sincerely,
Bruce
Bruce Kent
Vice Chair

LET ME DISPOSE OF one small matter raised in the Monsignor's letter before going further. He writes that contrary to the views held by many respectable and responsible persons John Hackett is really a decent chap." I wonder if I could perhaps be told the names of some of these respectable and responsible persons so that I could ask them upon what grounds they hold a contrary view.

There is, however, a much more important matter to discuss. I have for 30 years been saying that all-out nuclear world war is the ultimate obscenity, and that any use of a nuclear weapon on land in Europe will open Pandora's box. We cannot guess what will come out of that, but in high probability it will be early and steep escalation towards the strategic exchange we all dread. The essential debate is, of course, not about *whether*, but *how*—not about *whether* we want a nuclear war but *how* we prevent it.

To suggest that a unilateral renunciation of nuclear weapons by ourselves would be followed by the Soviet Union is, in the light of common sense and experience, quite futile. We abandoned chemical weapons, for instance, in the 1950s. Did the USSR follow suit? Theirs have increased tenfold since then, and more. I reluctantly have to endorse the view expressed by the Pope, Cardinal Hume, and Archbishop Runcie: that, uncomfortable though it may be, there is as yet no better safeguard against nuclear world war than nuclear deterrence. These all suggest that, however repugnant, nuclear deterrence must, at least for the present, be retained.

I am not in any way "obliged", as the Monsignor claims, to hold any views whatsoever, least of all the infantile opinions his letter suggests. Some obligation to follow a superior's lead may well, on the other hand, be thought to fall upon a senior member of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. In a matter as important as nuclear deterrence this is something that the Monsignor might wish, at some appropriate time, to discuss with the Holy Father. No obligation to follow any line at all,

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except that dictated by conscience and common sense, bears upon me; and what is said here about the inevitable posture of a former military man is no more than fantasy.

What chiefly deserves attention in Monsignor Kent's letter, however, in any discussion on whether this man is malign or merely muddle-headed, is one quite startling statement: "He always goes on fighting the war before last."

Bruce Kent knows very well that, with some others, I wrote a very widely read book (it sold over 2 million copies in 23 editions in 10 languages) on a world war which was not in fact *the one before last* (the First World War), nor even the *last* (the Second World War) but the *next* (World War III). He cannot easily have forgotten this, for we have debated aspects of that piece of writing more than once in public. However, though Monsignor Kent is clearly on all this evidence somewhat fanciful by nature and apparently of unreliable memory as well, whatever else he may be he has not yet, in my own view (which I realise is not universally shared), shown himself to be more malign than merely muddle-headed. I look forward with confidence to his continuing to furnish the same sort of evidence as that offered in this correspondence to support me in maintaining this position.

London Commentary

A Mandate for Humility?

By Edward Pearce

ENTERING A YEAR which is horribly likely to produce a General Election we find ourselves more confused by the polls than we would expect. A Conservative lead of 8 points, according to Gallup, made the latter part of December sour for the Opposition, taking the brandy out of the sauce and the sage from the onion. But no sooner had a pleasure-battered electorate stirred for epiphany and work than a poll from Marplan proclaimed a margin of only 1%.

Agnosticism about polls from both sides may have rather more justification in the light of such dazzling variations than the usual whimper at a bad figure. "Oh, I don't take polls seriously." Like hell they don't. And taking them seriously really leads to only one likely conclusion—that the electorate is less committed, less party-minded, and more disposed for a wander round the supermarket. For despite the growing extravagance of the popular press—"LAWSON FLAYS LABOUR", "MAGGIE LASHES LAYABOUTS"—that sort of depressing thing—the parties are nearer to one another in substance than they have been for a decade-and-a-half.

The effective abandonment of a tight money policy by a Chancellor of the Exchequer, shepherded by his Prime Minister as she looks for a snap election to win, is paralleled by a caution on public spending and trade-union power not seen in Labour ranks since the early 1960s. The present rather vulgar mood of politics has little to do with ideology or with any other form of sincere conviction translated into policy. It has everything to do with old-style electioneering on a small flood of consumer credit in the hope that the flood can be cut off as soon as the votes have been counted and the Opposition decently interred.

Speaking of which, Harold Macmillan, so lately elevated Earl of Stockton (the run-down Durham town which returned him to Parliament in the 1930s), never showed better timing than in his on-cue passing at the year end. For it was Macmillan, elegant excoriator of Mrs Thatcher—"I recall that unemployment in Stockton in 1935 was 29%. I went there for a party of some friends recently . . . and it was 28%. Rather a sad way to end one's life, don't you think?"—who, as the showman Prime Minister, perfected the bought election on easy terms in 1959.

He stood in bitter contrast to his Labour opponent, Hugh Gaitskell. They saw each other respectively as charlatan and preacherman. Lately Mrs Thatcher, with an angry threat through her lobby spokesman, the grey, discreet, universally known Bernard Ingham, had briefly threatened to cut Neil Kinnock off from the security briefing always granted to a Leader of the Opposition. And the two leaders regard each other, though for different reasons, with as much detestation as the Prime Minister and Gaitskell in 1959.

Yet now, as in those days of "Butskellism" (compounded from Butler and Gaitskell), the registered programmatic differences, with the single exception of Defence, are not huge. Labour is a modest advocate of job-directed expenditure. The Government is playing the plastic credit-card for all it can. The Tories have largely completed their privatisation programme, except for the questionable issue of British Airways; and anyway, did it ever have half as much to do with competition as it had with short-term one-off revenue (with which elections can be swayed)? Perhaps there will, and perhaps there will not, be a tax cut. But, if achieved, it will again be a simple inducement to vote.

Otherwise we wait to see how the price of oil will move, look to see if unemployment will dip from the figure arrived at by 17 separate massages, big and little, applied to it by the Department of Employment. But there are no major departures promised and in a sense both parties are reconciled to a modest-growth, low-inflation, high-unemployment economy.

ELECTORALLY THIS MEANS that we are less into party politics and more into personalities than is readily appreciated. For not only does policy appear essentially *ad hoc* and pragmatic, but the pull of party as a *patria*, a political fatherland, is simply not what it was.

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The huge divergences which turn up in by-elections, for all the self-correction at the end of Parliaments, have been an increasingly certain factor since the crash of Macmillan's Tories at Orpington in 1962. The experience was shared by Labour in 1968 at Meridan, Dudley, and Walthamstow, lay quiet for a while, then came bouncing back with Workington and Ashfield in the late 1970s, and seems hardly to have stopped in a spate of anti-Tory voting lately, of which Ryedale and Brecon are only outstanding names.

Mocking the Government-of-the-day, latterly for the benefit of a third party innocent of office, and in terms not reflected in the polls, has become a kind of sport. Macmillan, who, with much felicity and many endearing qualities, had distinctly brittle nerves, was shattered by the Orpington result. This Government, like Labour in office before it, winces, shrugs, and soldiers on, saying that by-elections are not typical.

WE SHOULD JUST CONSIDER the possibility that they may become more typical. Once the public has fallen into the habit of tugging beards, pulling out ties, and generally behaving like Boat Race night, it may equally fall out of a more general long-term reverence for the parties. The assumption that the voters will compose themselves and soberly go back to voting for the two great faiths on a steady pattern may be wavering. It will probably not waver enough to let the two small parties forming the SDP-Liberal Alliance collect the heavy wedge of votes which would make them arbiters of government this time. But what is probably true is that people will vote against any strong tendency.

Even in 1983, when the Tories lodged a huge majority of seats (though an unsensational percentage—42%), there were late signs, despite Labour's calamitous performance and impossible platform, of the vote tipping back from even worse calamity just before polling day. There were polls in the West Midlands (where I spent the last few days of the campaign) which, if followed through, would have swept even more Labour men out. That result didn't materialise. I would argue that the electorate is beginning to get some faint notion of its powers; that opinion polls, usually accurate up to the very last minute, can show voters how to tip the boat in the best traditions of George Savile, Marquis of Halifax, whose *Character of a Trimmer* (1688)—leaning first this way and then that against the inclination of the boat, to stop it capsizing altogether—is very close to English instincts.

In a sense that recent swing in the opinion polls was a perfect piece of Savilery. Mrs Thatcher was described as surging ahead. The Tory press, which gets more strident as its vocabulary contracts, gloated in unison, and many a citizen with serious doubts about Neil Kinnock as Prime Minister must have drawn breath and pondered. Nobody, in my view, wants a landslide for anyone. In practice, only the Tories could have it; but if they look strong in the polls expect a reaction, a conscious tipping of the boat to see that they get nothing of the sort. (The West German general election has shown the *CDU* heavily underperforming on projection—which suggests that Halifax has an international following.) Equally, if a completely hung Parliament looks likely, I would expect the Tories to out-perform their promised score.

THE IDEA OF CONTROLLING politicians, of using data from the polls in order to contradict them, is a fear present at the back of many political minds—and I would not be surprised before long to find either the authoritarian Right (no apologies for that word) or its Left-wing equivalent trying to suppress "late" polls. Though unknown in his time, the opinion poll is a very Jeffersonian device; it arms the electors against the governors. Increasingly we are fascinated by ever-larger amounts of data on voting trends. That wise commentator Peter Kellner has taken a local council by-election, once as big a turn-on as a cold Brussels sprout, and turned it into a large poll under electoral conditions. The swing to or from Labour in the Mumps ward of Oldham can be of account well outside South Lancashire. . . .

What people will want to do with such knowledge is not particularly difficult to answer. To suggest that they will not elect Labour, partly because on Defence it has opted for a purity of unilateral purpose not quite of this world, seems reasonable. Equally, I very much doubt if they want Mrs Thatcher very much longer as chief moralist to the nation, droning on about family values as she treats truth before the Commons with jittery circumspection. Probably they don't want a hung Parliament. The notion is too foreign, too Belgian. Edward Heath would love it, so would the *Davidsbundler* of the Alliance. But feelings are mixed. Wartime coalition had retrospective popularity; haggling among politicians has never had much appeal. On balance, the country looks set to do what Francis Pym wanted last time—only less so: a Tory majority of not very much, sufficient to continue government, induce humility (and, possibly, dispatch the lady), cannot be far from the public consensus.

WE SHOULD REMEMBER that because of the exceptional gains by the Tories in 1983, the next election will have some of the characteristics of an off-year in US politics when landslides are re-landscaped. Labour, for all the principled unwisdom of its Defence policy, will make some sort of comeback. From 209 seats out of 650, you can hardly do anything else! Though a very experienced Labour politician argues (and has maintained this figure for some time) that Labour's realistic *ceiling* is 280, the marginal Northern, Midland, and (more uncertainly) the London seats will come back to Labour—enough for it to do respectably, not enough for it to win. The Alliance will outperform its awful recent polls because of the idiosyncracies of long-nursed seats, constituencies where a sitting MP is retiring and the local Alliance man is running-like-hell. The Tories will subside but they will not collapse. There are 17 Ulstermen likely to split 14:3 between Unionists and Constitutional Nationalists; and the Scottish Nationalists may spring the odd surprise in that country.

Overall, we are talking about a satisfactory outcome. The Tories have grown arrogant and prelatical in office, dispensing with the truth when the mood has taken them; but

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Kenneth Baker's ideas on Education are broadly right and very necessary. Labour at Front Bench level is impressively reformed but Labour in total power (honourably excepting certain places like Birmingham) is nightmarishly intolerant, petty, and persecuting. Local British government enacts at Punch-and-Judy level the notion of what the worst imaginings of militant Labour nationally might be. The Alliance has virtue and much appeal, but lacks credibility for the time being. It needs a steady confidence-building assent.

All things considered, we may get it just about right with a mandate for humility.

On European Money

A Sovereign Remedy

By John Pinder

First the British Government steered clear of the European Monetary System's exchange rate system because the pound was too low. Then time was unripe for entry because the pound was too high. Now the easiest way to raise a laugh in Europe is to point out that, although the pound is lower again, yet other reasons have been found why the time is still unripe. Better than raising easy laughs, however, would be to understand why British behaviour appears so wayward to so many reasonable people.

The easiest explanations are in terms of personality: until recently that of a Treasury jealous of its prerogatives; now Mrs Thatcher's alone. But behind the personality of a particular organisation or individual, and the technical arguments they may use, lies a generally accepted view of Britain's role in Europe and the world; and for some decades this has been limited to the taking of decisions within frameworks constructed by others. Both the big majority who now want the pound in the exchange-rate mechanism and the crucial few who still resist it restrict the range of their vision to the choice between participating in a mechanism established by the continental Europeans, or remaining outside it in a looser international system devised essentially by the Americans. Yet structures devised by others might be expected to be inconvenient for us. This has indeed been our experience with recent international monetary arrangements, let alone the European Community's system of agricultural support and finance. Why, then, this long-standing passivity about international structures?

It was not always so. The British were highly active at Bretton Woods, and Keynes in particular left his mark on the post-War international economic order. As the Americans' principal wartime ally, Britain still had a special influence. But the weight of the United States already made itself felt. Keynes lost his battle for a strong international banking function; and the failure of Congress to ratify deprived us of the International Trade Organisation. Nor could Britain's Wartime influence escape the ravages of time. For the Americans, new facts were bound to overlay the special relationship. France, Germany, and Japan recovered as successful rivals for attention. It was not Britain but the European Community which, with the Americans, took the initiatives in reshaping the world trading system through "the Kennedy Round". When new monetary arrangements are devised, Britain is a less significant partner than Germany or Japan. The role of faithful lieutenant was bound to become less influential and satisfactory. Was there another that could be performed in its place?

Until the fall of France in June 1940, Britain had been alive with ideas about Anglo-French union as a nucleus for post-War united Europe, to include a democratic post-War Germany. A spate of such plans, from the Foreign Office, through Chatham House, to Lord Beveridge's "Federal Union Research Institute", and, highly significantly, Jean Monnet's "Anglo-French Coordinating Committee", culminated on the latter's initiative in Churchill's offer of union to France, approved unanimously by the Cabinet and conveyed to the French Government on 16 June 1940. The British could hardly have been accused during that period of failing to envisage a structure for post-War Europe. But the French Government refused the offer. Pétain sought an armistice from Hitler, and Britain turned inevitably to America. Thus the British emerged from the War with immense confidence in the US, a suspicion of Continental entanglements, and an enhanced belief in the strength and value of their own nation-state.

The British were, then, in no mood to help construct a European Community. Churchill did call for "a kind of United States of Europe". But Churchill's visions did not appeal to peacetime Britain. More typical was a Civil Service view, recently recalled by Lord Plowden, that "if you moved towards the surrender of sovereignty towards Europe, the Americans would go away. . . ."[1] So after Monnet had tried and failed to interest the British in being France's primary partner in European integration, he turned to the Germans, who responded readily to the idea of a Community structure which would accommodate France and Germany in a new cooperative relationship, and which could eventually become an equal partner of the United States. So far from helping to build this new structure, the British, intent on preserving the status quo and American hegemony, veered between ignoring and discouraging it. This British policy succeeded—with the help of de Gaulle and the French Communists—in averting the establishment of a European pillar for the Atlantic Alliance in the form of a "European Defence Community". But more or less malign neglect did not prevent

[1] Quoted in Michael Charlton, *The Price of Victory* (BBC, 1983), p. 84.

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the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community, followed by the European Economic Community; and these provided a framework for Franco-German reconciliation to replace the previous deadly struggle for supremacy, as well as for the six member countries' success in the second industrial revolution. The Community also converted the relationship with the US from hegemony to equality in the field of trade, where the EC was endowed with adequate power and instruments.

THE PURPOSE OF TELLING this old story is not to rake up a grudge against the generation of British policy-makers who made the wrong choices in our relationship with Europe between 1945 and 1960. They cost us dear, in a decade and a half of inferior access to the European Community market until we joined in 1973, in the agricultural and budgetary problems which then faced us because of our absence when the Community Agricultural Policy was devised, and in the loss of political standing which resulted from such errors of judgment. They also prevented Europe from becoming an equal partner of the United States in fields such as currency and conventional defence, where integration could have proceeded in the 1950s if Britain had helped. They were wrong but, against the background of 1940-45, understandably so.

The point of the story is that this attitude towards the development of European institutions still colours British policy today, although those circumstances that made it understandable have long since vanished. Britain no longer enjoys such special privileges in its relationship with the US. Americans are not encouraged to stay with Europe because of European reluctance to unite. The British nation-state is not stronger than those of our principal neighbours, nor are those neighbours unreliable people. Yet even if the anti-structuralist view of Europe has been softened enough to enable the British to work in the institutions that have been established by other Europeans, the view remains at the best a-structuralist: the British regard the development of the existing institutions or the creation of new ones as impractical nonsense of the sort which foreigners unfortunately will go on about. Implicitly, this confirms the status quo of American hegemony in fields beyond trade and, to the extent that economic integration proceeds without stronger and more democratic Community institutions, it opens the way to a degree of German hegemony within Europe. This is perfectly illustrated by the case of the European Monetary System.

In the late 1970s, the French and the Germans wanted to moderate the impact of the dollar on the franc and the mark. Resistance to "American hegemony" was a long-standing French policy, natural for President Giscard d'Estaing to pursue. Chancellor Schmidt was particularly concerned about flight from the weak dollar forcing the mark upwards and making German exports uncompetitive. They agreed that a structure linking European currencies together could spread the pressure of the dollar more evenly among them and thus make stability of intra-European exchange rates easier to sustain. They also, as Schmidt has put it, wanted "to create gradually, and step by step, a European currency whose global weight would be such that it could match the dollar and the yen."[2] They did not imagine that this could be done without institutions and instruments, so in 1979 they launched the European Monetary System with its exchange-rate mechanism and credit facilities to help with balance-of-payments support.

The EMS (European Monetary System) has by now had a good run of success. Without imposing a straitjacket on currencies that really needed realignment, the exchange rate mechanism has provided a framework for a fair degree of stability between the participating currencies during periods of both a rising and a falling dollar. This has been helpful to small and medium-sized firms, which cope less easily with an exchange-rate switchback than do the large ones. Exchange-rate stability has also helped damp down the pressures to reintroduce protectionism in intra-Community trade. There was a severe danger that France would take a protectionist way out of its currency and payments crisis in 1983: and it was the political significance of the EMS as well as of the European Community that led President Mitterrand (never much interested in economics as such) to choose to adapt French economic policy rather than to buck the European system. Such a further fragmentation on the part of the Europeans would, among other things, have reinforced American hegemony, whereas it can be reasonably argued that the EMS helped Europeans to mitigate the dominating influence of very high American interest rates.

GIVEN THE BRITISH PREJUDICE against new structures, it is not surprising that the Callaghan Government stood aside from the Franco-German initiative which launched the EMS, and declined to participate in its most significant element: the exchange-rate mechanism. It is again true to form that so many of the initial sceptics advocate British participation now that the structure established by our neighbours has shown itself successful. Equally familiar is the failure to be impressed by this further evidence that institutional development can provide the basis for success. This is particularly unfortunate in that the EMS needs further development if it is to make its full contribution to the strength of the European economy and to a more balanced international monetary system; and Britain, with its strong financial institutions, is well placed to give the EMS a much-needed push. Yet the lively debate on the Continent on how to develop the system has so far found virtually no echo in Britain, where discussion remains confined to the question of whether to catch up with what our neighbours did over seven years ago.

One motive for strengthening the EMS is to increase the European countries' influence on American policy, which has damaged the British and other Europeans through upward pressure on interest rates, exaggerated swings in dollar exchange-rates, and failure to deal adequately with the crisis

[2] Helmut Schmidt, "The European Monetary System: Proposals for Further Progress", *The World Today* (April 1985), p. 87.

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of Third World debt. There is now a British tendency to discount this motive on the grounds that Mr James Baker is, in the American national interest, introducing a more co-operative period of US policy without any stronger pressure from Europe. But it does not seem realistic, on the grounds of a somewhat better conjuncture in US policy, to discount the experience of two decades typified by neglect that was less than benign in its effects, and punctuated by shocks such as the impact of Secretary of State Connally. A Europe with greater monetary weight would surely help to keep Americans more constantly aware that their interest lies in accommodation with their partners, not in a heedless nationalism.

As a further step towards a European currency that could "match the dollar and the yen", the governments that established the EMS agreed that it should by the end of 1982 progress to a Stage II, with the establishment of a European Monetary Fund disposing of a fifth of the member states' reserves. The European Council subsequently postponed the transition to Stage II until "the appropriate time", which has so far proved as elusive as "the ripe time" at which the pound is to enter the exchange-rate mechanism. Professor Robert Triffin has suggested that the appropriate time would be now, so that the ability of such a Fund (or, as he prefers to call it, European Bank) to intervene in the currency markets could without delay be used, not as a "*machine de guerre*" against the dollar, but as "an indispensable instrument for the efficient cooperation of the Community with the United States."[3] But the Germans remain wary about risking the integrity of the mark in further monetary integration, and the British still show no interest in ideas of structural development of the EMS.

The weight that the European Monetary Fund would give to Europe would be much enhanced by promotion of the private market for the ecu and integration of the European capital markets. Helmut Schmidt has made a series of proposals for promoting the private use of the ecu,[4] and Tommaso Padoa-Schioppa has shown how the official and the private ecu could be mutually strengthened through a link within the Bank for International Settlements, which houses both the official ecu and the clearing of the private one.[5] None of this depends on the prior establishment of the Fund; nor does progress towards completion of the European market for capital and financial services, as the removal of the barriers to transactions within the EC has come to be called. Completion of the European Community market by 1992 has, indeed, been approved by the European Council and enshrined in the Single European Act, which came into force on the first of January. Typical of the remaining blockages are French and Italian exchange controls, despite some recent relaxation, and German regulations that impede the sale of insurance services in Germany from companies established in other member countries such as Britain.

The EC needs to rid itself of such fragmentation if its financial institutions and system are to turn dependence into interdependence in relation to the United States. Britain, with its relatively strong financial institutions, has the greatest interest in securing free access to the whole of the European Community's capital and financial markets, and thus securing a wide home base for the City which will enable it to sustain a degree of equality with New York. The British Government has indeed shown enthusiasm for completion of the Community's internal market. But the integration of the member countries' markets is a politically difficult project, involving changes in laws and threats to interests that are dear to the various governments. Even with the ratification of the Single European Act, which is necessarily somewhat general in character, the particular changes required will be hard to secure without a powerful political momentum. The British Government is scarcely contributing to such momentum when it evades the exchange rate mechanism, shows scant interest in the further development of the EMS, and seemed more concerned in the discussions leading to the Single European Act about retaining the decision-blocking veto than about making the Community's institutions strong enough to take the hundreds of necessary decisions efficiently, and democratic enough to do so with unimpeachable legitimacy.

The posture is uncomfortably reminiscent of that which failed to secure the "Free Trade Area" on which the British Government had set its heart in 1956-58, with its narrow concentration on industrial free trade to the exclusion of interest in agricultural trade and Community institutions, on which various of the countries whose agreement we needed had set *their* hearts. Completion of the internal market is a more challenging project, but it is essentially free trade in modern dress. Now it is monetary integration and again the strengthening of common institutions in which the British Government shows little interest, although these would not only help to generate political momentum in most of the member countries but also be logical and practical counterparts of completing the internal market.

The perspective of building up an ecu that could "match the dollar" gives the sceptics the use of their ultimate deterrent, in the argument that a completely integrated capital market together with irrevocably fixed exchange rates is incompatible with autonomy of economic policy for each member state. Economies so tightly locked together cannot go their separate ways in their economic policies, so they must either accept the policies of the strongest member state or jointly make common policies in common institutions.

In the absence of joint policy-making, the smaller countries generally accept that they must align on the policies of a larger one, as Denmark and the Benelux countries align on the Federal Republic of Germany. Within the European

[3] Robert Triffin, "The Strengthening of the European Monetary System", *The Federalist* (Pavia, March 1985), pp. 43 ff.
[4] See *The World Today*, passim.
[5] Tommaso Padoa-Schioppa, in a lecture at the European University Institute released by the Bank of Italy on 17 February 1986.

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Monetary System, each of the larger countries has so far kept an extra means of manoeuvre: for France exchange controls, for Italy these and a wider band of exchange-rate fluctuation, for Britain absence from the exchange-rate mechanism. Negotiations of a realignment within the exchange-rate mechanism (i.e. the adjustable peg) remains for all participants an alternative to complete subordination to the policies of the strongest.

THE PRICE of such autonomy is a continued fragmentation of the Common Market, whether by barriers to the movement of capital or by alteration of exchange rates. Such fragmentation limits the scope for Europeans to move towards equality with the Americans and to respond to the growing challenge from Japan. The complete freedom of capital movements within the European Community and opening of the markets for financial services by 1992 has been endorsed by all the member states as a treaty obligation in the Single European Act. There is no such obligation with respect to exchange rates. After the British Government accepts that the time is ripe to enter the exchange-rate mechanism, it will still be possible to negotiate adjustments of the peg.

Modern monetarist economists have argued that exchange-rate fluctuations are no barrier to optimal economic relations. But the experience of floating since the early 1970s seemed far from optimal to those who conduct those relations, whether in private business or public policy. Nor did floating give policy-makers (apart perhaps from the Americans) the degree of autonomy they had hoped; and the rapid growth in the private use of the ecu—to come from virtually nowhere to be the fifth most important currency, ahead of sterling, in the international banking and bond markets—demonstrates the strong demand for more stable money. Increasing currency stability is rightly seen as an important objective. The integration of capital and financial markets together with this parallel growth of an international currency seem in any case likely to reduce the autonomy of member countries' economic policies. If Helmut Schmidt's vision of an ecu to match the dollar comes to exert any influence on member governments, and they take the aim of reducing dollar hegemony seriously, they will at the same time further reduce such autonomy as they retain in their relations with each other.

AS THINGS STAND NOW, this autonomy would be renounced in favour of the member country with the strongest economy. In effect, the Community's economy would be managed by the German Government and the Deutsche Bundesbank. Their influence over the other member countries' economies and policies—already great—would become overwhelming. One can easily imagine much worse masters. But the other members would be a spineless lot if they were to accept such subordination without a serious effort to achieve the alternative: joint economic and monetary policies made in common institutions. For although its economic weight gives the Federal Republic preponderance in its monetary relations with the other states of Western Europe, it does not outweigh partners such as Britain and France in the common European Community institutions. If Germany's partners want to share any autonomy that monetary integration gives them in relations with the dollar, instead of exchanging it for hegemony of the mark, they will have to give the Community's institutions more power to make economic and monetary policy.

Here the sceptics will ask whether the Germans would agree to this. If there is a merger of autonomy, it is they who have the most autonomy to merge. Yet Helmut Schmidt, who initially promoted the European Monetary System under short-term economic pressures, has affirmed that monetary integration is an important long-term aim, and Tommaso Padoa-Schioppa has shown how it accords with German interests. Political and security considerations could also weigh heavily in Germany. But this brings us to the question that the British should be asking themselves. For the Germans are not exactly encouraged to take the prospect of monetary integration seriously while the British are so negative both about this and about the Community's political development.

THE ALLEGED RELUCTANCE of "others" has become one of the stock devices used by the British to avoid asking themselves whether the monetary or political development of the European Community would be in their own interest. The prospect that floating rates would offer painless autonomy was another means of avoidance, even if it could be honestly employed only by people with no feel for what it means to live in the real world of interdependent economies. That dream has now given way to a Machiavellian acceptance that hegemony and follow-my-leader are the ineluctable way of the world. But what would Machiavelli have made of the European Community? And with the example of this structure expressly designed as an alternative to hegemony in front of us, how can we resign ourselves to a subordinate role for Britain instead? So we return to our point of departure: the British habit, lazily perpetuated, of refusing to consider structural developments, whether towards monetary union or federal institutions.

This laziness has already done us enough damage. Without a perspective of steps to develop the EMS into a monetary union, linking together promotion of the ecu, completion of the markets for capital and financial services, establishment of the European Monetary Fund, and governance by effective and democratic Community institutions, such damage will continue to be done. We will remain vulnerable to the swings of American policy; and without the first step of joining the exchange-rate mechanism we will remain considerably more vulnerable than those who are in it, and will continue paying the price of higher interest rates. We will be setting a context for the City where it has to find its way in the world through openings in systems designed by others, instead of being based in a major system which it plays a large part in shaping, and which can negotiate with other major systems on level

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terms. We will be wishing on the Germans a role of European hegemony, instead of building a European structure which replaces hegemony by democracy. We will be favouring the domination of the dollar and the yen, rather than striving for an equal relationship between the European Community and the United States.

THE PERSPECTIVE OF step-by-step development of the EMS corresponds to two of the great facts of contemporary political economy: interdependence and democracy. Interdependence makes the jealous guarding of national sovereignty a vain and ultimately foolish alternative to participation in an effective multi-national system. Democracy generates a strong current against hegemony and in favour of more equal relationships: common policy-making and law-making, of which the European Community is the foremost multinational model; and partnership between sovereign equals, for which the most striking example was the Kennedy Round.

Seen against this background, participation in the exchange-rate mechanism is not just a one-off decision which appears on balance to be advantageous in itself, but a step in developing a structure that corresponds to the economic and political facts of our age and to the need for a serious effort to manage interdependence in Europe and in the wider world, in a more effective, more democratic, and less supine way.

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Life Before Words

Coleridge as Psychotherapist—By ERIC RHODE

"Well-being is not a state of mind or disposition of character. If it were, it might belong to a vegetable-man whose whole existence was passed in sleep."
Aristotle, ETHICS (10.6)

"But suppose he is unconscious? Some people argue: if he is not conscious of being good, or of being engaged in virtuous activity, how can he be in a state of well-being? There is no reason why we should lose states of well-being in sleep. You can be healthy without knowing you are healthy, handsome without knowing you are handsome. . . . Our minds grow, in one way or another: and sometimes in ways that our senses are unable to register."
Derived from **Plotinus**, ENNEAD (1.4.9)

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE, intending to honour a pledge to write about "the nature and genesis" of the Imagination, quotes from *Paradise Lost* at the beginning of the thirteenth chapter of the *Biographia Literaria*—he clearly sees the poem as important to his theory of nature and genesis. Obviously, he was not alone in appreciating its importance, in this and other ways. His sensibility, and the sensibility of many people in his culture, owed something to the kind of creationism described by Milton in the seventh book of the poem.

Adam there asks the archangel Raphael to tell Eve and him the story of the Creation. He realises that Raphael, as an ambassador from a spiritual realm unrelated to space and time, is able to anticipate future danger:

> *. . . But since thou hast vouchsafed*
> *Gently for our instruction to impart*
> *Things above earthly thought, which yet concerned*
> *Our knowing, as to highest Wisdom seemed,*
> *Deign to descend now lower and relate*
> *What may no less perhaps avail us known.*

About this enterprise, there is a sense of a futurity or unknowability being violated—a risk being needlessly run.

The creation Raphael describes is far more convincing in its exuberant idealisation than Milton's Eden, which gives us infancy without infants. The creation of the physical cosmos—of heaven and earth, light and darkness, waters and firmament—is self-sufficient and harmonious in its coordination. The universe is all play, from the spouting of waters to the movement of stars. A commitment to the exuberance of natural creation finds its style in idealising acts of verbal play: the realisation of Miltonic reality requires no less a mode.

Everyone has reason to delight in this creation; it turns out to be better than anyone might have hoped for. Even its creator has reason to be awed. Consider the solemnity of "And God created the great whales. . . ." Every element in the animal and vegetable kingdoms fulfils its natural powers. There is no need to name functions, or to label creatures with attributes: everything just is. Flowers blossom without some divine edict which insists that they should blossom. There is no fall from grace if they fail.

The catalogue falters with the climactic pomp of Man's creation. Loaded with solemn imperial tasks, in a way that underlines his essential superfluity, Man is ill-equipped to take on the functions which Milton's God assigns to him—one could hardly conceive of a species less well-equipped. Instead of a useful ability, he is given praise: he is "the master work", made in the image of God, and "endued/With the sanctity of reason". He is expected to rule over and subdue the animal and vegetable kingdom and (with all this) to be "magnanimous to correspond with Heaven". He is also, of course, not allowed to eat from the Tree of Knowledge—a slight proscription compared to the other demands made on him. Even Milton, the noblest of our kind, seldom manages to fulfil these persecutory demands.

ODDLY, WHAT MILTON'S GOD does not ask of man, at least in the first moment of creation, is something that turns out to be his most engaging aptitude: his capacity to appreciate and enjoy the non-human world. In exceptional hands (Milton, the Haydn who wrote *The Creation*), the capacity to appreciate becomes imaginatively god-like.

The beauty of the pre-human world appears to be largely one of anticipation—a waiting for Man. Or so we would like to believe, perhaps because the thought of a beautiful world in which mankind has no being is too desolating for human

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beings to bear. Yet there is one hopeful way of considering the world without mankind. I should like to suggest that when we think about such a world we may in part be trying to retrieve pre-verbal sensations—such as infants experience before they can reason through words. When Thomas Gray, in a quotation that catches an intellectual climate, asserts that "Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,/and waste its sweetness on the desert air", he referred among other things to the potentialities unrealised within us if we do not have an adequate notation (usually language) to help us realise them. And flowers blush unseen in another sense: in all of us there may be potentialities which adult symbolisations and means of education, however imaginative, fail to encompass. Literacy, in all its splendour, seldom allows for unconscious being or unexplored places in the mind which we may think of as awaiting discovery by non-literate means.

"O brave new world,/That has such people in't", gasps Miranda in *The Tempest*, a play which Coleridge sees as epitomising pure imagination. Miranda emerges from an island world which, imaginatively, precedes the creation of man. The island she lives on is all animal and vegetable kingdom. Its air breathes music. It suggests brave new worlds that no eye has seen, pre-verbal potentialities that await their means of symbolisation, Americas of the mind that precede the coming into being of reasoning man.

Or possible symbols that remain denied. Some of Coleridge's first-recorded intuitions about the Imagination occur in an essay on the brutality of the slave-trade:

> ". . . we may form some idea of the hot & pestilent vapours arising from their confinement between the decks by the fact that the very timbers of the vessel are rotted by them . . . slaves who have been thrust down at night have been brought up dead in the morning . . . negroes have been known to choak themselves by throwing back their tongues. . . . They have been heard to sing in their captivity, and this has been mentioned as a proof that they cared little for slavery—but a witness who knew their language heard them sing, & their songs were songs of lamentation."

Tongue-choking, or retreats into pre-verbal frustration, was later to have a more familiar reference, in Coleridge's dealings with his son (*Notebook 1*, 1400[1]).

> "Derwent (July 6th/1803) to whom I was explaining what his senses were for—he had never once thought of connecting sight with his eyes, &c—I asked him what his Tongue was for & I told him/& to convince, held his Tongue/he was not at all affected—having been used to have his voluntary power controlled by others. Sometime after I asked him again/he had forgotten—I bade him hold his Tongue and try to say Papa—he did, & finding that he could not speak, he turned pale as death and in the reaction from fear flushed red, & gave me a blow in the face/2 years & 10 months old, within 8 days."

This is to take literally the injunction: Hold your tongue. Usually the most considerate of fathers, Coleridge may have been driven into cruelty by a wish to project into his child the fear, as a highly verbal person, of being struck dumb. He had been desolated by the death of his beloved father—and being struck dumb on that occasion was related to an incapacity to speak to one's father.

> "In a minute my mother heard a noise in his throat—and spoke to him—but he did not answer—and she spoke repeatedly in vain. Her SHRIEK awakened me—& I said, Papa is dead—I did not know of my Father's return, but I knew that he was expected. How I came to think of his Death, I cannot tell."
>
> Letter to Poole, 16 October 1797

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY THEORIES of perception are closely related to beliefs in the importance of memory, or the securing of optic and auditory phenomena in time. The initially blank mind is expected to act as some sort of register. Theories of this kind are bound up with a certain conception of literacy—mnemonics about how we should teach children to read. Misguided views concerning mind often derived from the experience of being taught by rote. Coleridge with his metaphoric use of reflections and echoes has trouble shaking off this false legacy. But he does shake it off. In part, his achievement is to show us how we can be literate without losing touch with pre-verbal potentiality.

The experience of becoming a father was all-important to him. The arrival of Hartley, his firstborn, was like a visitation of the muse. Consider the opening to the poem "Frost at Midnight". The silent infant sleeping in a cot by its father's side lightly links in the poet's mind with the silent ministry of the frost outside. As Coleridge elsewhere says, the potentiality works within us as the actuality works upon us. A silent ministry works unseen outside the poet's room, in nature, and also within the sleeping infant, evolving traceries and shapes that words cannot capture. It is like the Plotinian good which works within us though we may not be aware of it. We are far now from Newtonian deism, in which a watchmaker deity leaves the world to tick out its automatic destiny. A warm and kindly and modest goodness is always working within us, even at moments of pain. As a father, Coleridge keeps watch over his son; while his own father, a dead and much loved minister, continues to work within Coleridge himself. The silent ministry of the frost anticipates the play that the infant will enter into as toddler. Already the modalities of a later symbolism are being foreshadowed, as though traced on a window. We can lose our intuition of a pre-verbal activity through misuses of verbal skill.

For Coleridge, acts of imaginative identification are always monistic. He notices, as his son plays, how the animal and vegetable universe also plays, and sometimes universe and infant play together, leaving the adult out. The first moments of creation are ceaselessly relived as the Miltonic deity communes (outside adult consciousness) with the non-verbal elements of our universe: with animals and with vegetables

[1] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Notebooks*, ed. Kathleen Coburn (3 vols., 1962-74).

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and with the powers that the physicist and chemist would wish to describe. The pre-verbal realm implies relationships which people locked in reasoning and words will find strange. It supposes theories of incorporation (or introjection) and inspiration much richer and more feeling than any theory of memory as mental register allows for. It has no need for the memory-fetishism that reasoning people sometimes make of the past.

IT IS SOMETIMES ARGUED that the present-day agnostic distrust of hierarchies-of-being has undermined any belief in Coleridge's Imagination. But the psychoanalytic belief in the importance of pre-verbal states allows it to come alive again. A capacity to experience pre-verbal states is important to our well-being. A drowning sailor clutches at a spar. An ability to tolerate the nature of pre-verbal states (the dissolution attendant on coming-to-be) is bound up with the need to discover "good objects". In this context, language can be used as a false good object, leading to delusions of independence.

Descartes thought that animals had no souls because they could not speak: dumb brutes! But why should the soul necessarily be related to one form of conscious thinking? For Coleridge, God communicates with the animals and vegetables and the physical order, and by non-verbal means. The ancients thought of this communication as music—the various parts of the universe sing to each other like dolphins.

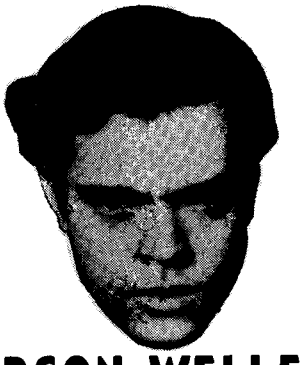
The world that is to come and the world that we have lost are two sides of the same coin. We are absent from both. Here, the insight of a Milton can be echoed in observing children at play—as in an observation of my own. A Bach cantata plays on a gramophone. Three children spontaneously begin to dance to the music. Their movements have a circular quality: they turn about themselves or dance in such a way as to move in a circle. An eight-year-old girl in a pink ankle-length dressing-gown puts out her arms straight and turns round and round. She seems to want to have the sensation of being a sphere. The music is full of circularity, as if striving to encompass that sensation. The dancers respond in ways that we can see.

And, of course, the ancients thought of music as derived from the celestial bodies: the music of the spheres. Plato and Aristotle were bemused by the sphere's beauty.

> "The sphere is the most uniform of all solid figures, and the only one which, by rotating on its axis, can move within its own limits without change of place. This axial rotation symbolises the movement of Reason and is superior to all rectilinear motions."
>
> F. M. Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology*, p. 54

This is the monism essential to Coleridge's Imagination: certain actions or states of mind seem able to bring the universe together in one harmonious orchestration. Coleridge writes to William Sotheby about the Psalms: for the Hebrew poets "Each Thing has a Life of its own, & yet they are all one Life. In God they move & Live and HAVE their Being—

'READ NO HISTORY: NOTHING BUT BIOGRAPHY, FOR THAT IS LIFE WITHOUT THEORY'
— Benjamin Disraeli



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not HAD as the cold System of Newtonian Theology represents/but HAVE" (10 September 1802).

One of Coleridge's many sources was William Bartram's superb *Travels in North Carolina* (1791). Bartram moved through primordial landscapes in which there were few men. He carefully noted the variety and nature of plants and animals. The notion of a Miltonic creation is close:

> ". . . the luminous appearance of the seas at night, when all the waters seem transmuted into liquid silver; the prodigious bands of porpoises foreboding tempest, that appear to cover the ocean; the mighty whale, sovereign of the watery realms, who cleaves the seas in his course; the sudden appearance of land from the sea . . . capes and promontories emerging from the watery expanse like mighty giants, elevating their crests towards the skies . . . the amplitude and magnificence of these scenes are great indeed, and may present to the imagination, an idea of the first appearance of the earth to man at the creation."

Bartram observes a hunter slaughter a bear. He conveys his intense dismay at being unable to stop the man. The powerful scene at first made me recall Hemingway's persistent slaughter of birds and beasts. I then remembered with a slight shock that Bartram was a primary source-book for the writer of "The Ancient Mariner". Fallen man becomes a predator on the sacred creatures of the pre-verbal world—sacred in part because they speak without the gift of tongues.

COLERIDGE QUOTES Bartram at length in the first *Notebook*. Fortuitously or not, the quotations are placed next to observations made of children. In one of his letters to Thomas Poole, Coleridge suggests that an experience of fiction deepens our capacity for perception. It is as though the emotional and spatial dimensions—and extravagance—of certain fictions were a postulate for perception. He had read the *Arabian Nights* and fairy-tales, and acquired from them a sense of vastness and of the wholeness of things, so that when his father (who disapproved of reading of this kind and burnt the books) had shown him the night sky "& told me the names of the stars—and how Jupiter was a thousand times larger than our world—and that the other twinkling stars were suns that had worlds rolling round them . . . I heard him with a profound delight and admiration; but without the least mixture of wonder or incredulity."

Those without experience of fiction—the Experimentalists—could observe the world with "microscopic acuteness; but when they looked at great things, all became blank & they saw nothing—and denied (very illogically) that any thing could be seen; and uniformly put the negation of a power for the possession of a power—& called the want of imagination Judgment, & the never being moved to rapture Philosophy!"

A father points up to the sky; his son secretly aligns himself with something else, a prohibited romance, his mother perhaps, and claims a key to knowledge. Similarly, a little boy looks up at the moon: Bartram gazes, amazed, at the alligators—as exotic as anything in the *Arabian Nights*. The alligators make a terrible roaring; the whole earth seems to tremble. Another Coleridge quotation from Bartram (after the description of the boy looking at the moon) tells us that the roaring and the sonorous throat-rattling of the male alligators is a form of courtship. The female lays her egg "between a compost of mud, grass and herbage . . . when she is basking on the warm banks, with her brood around, you may hear the young ones whining & a-barking like young Puppies."

Among the alligator quotations—and another Bartram reference which anticipates "Kublai Khan", "Some wilderness-plot, green and fountainous & unviolated by Man"—we have the boy looking up at the moon:

> "—Hartley fell down & hurt himself—I caught him up crying & screaming—& ran out of doors with him.—The Moon caught his eye—he ceased crying immediately—& his eyes & the tears in them, how they glittered in the Moonlight!"

THE SYNTAX OF IMAGINATION is unconstrained by the exigencies of space and time. In a dream, the view from a window may be of events long past or of events still to come. The window frame separates inside from outside: it need not be a space-time frame; it may indicate some other demarcation, between levels of meaning. In the first *Notebook*, the alligators bear powerfully (as an atmosphere) on the experience of the little boy. It is as though the alligators were allusions in the mind of the boy's observer, Coleridge, thinking of his own aged parents—he was the tenth son, his father's favourite: allusions to wrinkled skin, well-used dugs on which ten infants had sucked, the presumed darkened skin of genitals—the alligators parentally court and snort and messily procreate, amazing the fastidious child.

They crawl. The child precociously walks, attempts to run, and falls. He looks up at the chaste, pale moon as though in discourse with it. The moon and the tears are pellucid, unlike alligators or a thousand, thousand slimy things. The observer of the scene, a pensive father, appears to be on the outside, as though his place as last-beloved had been supplanted. The tear-glitter in the child's eye reflects the light of the moon; it might be some transparency yielding an inner light which binds the child to the moon. In a similar fashion, the infant feeds from its mother and in some way—eye catching eye—reciprocally nourishes her. The tear and the moon are like the image of Ice that increases and decreases with the waxing and waning of the moon—in a "Cashmere" that anticipates the Xanadu of Coleridge's future dream.

Pre-verbal exchanges, the meetings of eyes of the mind, the furthering of imagination itself, are things that a poet-father might sense and yet find hard to articulate as he reaches out for words to define the pre-verbal. A little later in the first *Notebook* (226-228), Coleridge has three sequences that follow each other like the stanzas of a poem.

> "The Infant playing with its mother's Shadow—Rocking its little sister's cradle & singing to her with inarticulate voice.—

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> The flat pink-coloured stone painted over in jagged circles & strange parallelograms with the greenish black-spotted lichens.—
>
> The Life of the Siminole playful from infancy to Death compared to the Snow, which on a calm day falling scarce seems to fall & plays & dances in & out, to the very moment that it reaches the ground.—"

Coleridge would have read about the Seminole Indians in Bartram. It was he, though, who felt impelled to relate their lives to the playful dance of falling snow—a comparison recalling the frost's silent ministry. As against the speech and actions and general business of men, we have another largely silent, unobserved, and intensely creative world, represented by the infinitely complex dance of falling snow.

The infant playing with its mother's shadow is of the same order: the falling snow and the shadow are those elements in the pre-verbal that we must seize on in order to be able to speak. The infant cannot articulate its song—it is probably close in age to the time of speech since it has a younger sister cradled beside it. Playing with its mother's shadow would be an imaginative way of describing how the infant stretches out to articulate words, as though the shadow—like insubstantial language itself, a mother both present and yet absent—were something that one has to take into one's mouth in order to speak.

BETWEEN THE INFANT and the Indians comes the beautiful description of the flat, pink-coloured stone. (Kathleen Coburn, who edited the *Notebooks*, thinks the stone was probably discovered on the Quantocks.) With its jagged circles and strange parallelograms, the stone is like writing in an unfamiliar script, or writing as it might appear to someone who cannot read. Nature is clearly there to be read—Coleridge would have had that idea from Jakob Boehme (1575-1624) and his writings about the "signature" in nature. But how can we puzzle out its meanings? Presumably the frustration at being unable to read stirs up once more the fury we had felt at being unable to speak. Elsewhere Coleridge writes of Luther as an heroic poet struggling with the meanings and script of a Hebrew text and finding himself thwarted by a demonic shadow that seems to come between himself and it—a persecutory variant, perhaps, on the child's desire to play with its mother's elusive shadow. The stone, with its rune-like marks, is like some primary alphabet book that baffles and draws on the child: the feeding object appears to have become as unyielding as a stone.

COLERIDGE AT THIS TIME was taking notes for an intended study of infancy. He gives us a list of observations in *Notebook 1*, 330, 14. Child's play usually has no ulterior end; child's play is logos; both revealing of Reason and Reason in action. "The first smile—what kind of REASON it displays—the first smile after sickness." Reason for Coleridge is to use the eye of the mind, or the Imagination, to puzzle out spiritual meanings. Child's play is both itself and yet something other than itself: it reflects the first creation of the world, a self-sufficient and silent colloquy between God and his creatures—a text that does not need to be translated or tortured over because its meaning shines forth:

> "The wisdom & graciousness of God in the infancy of the human species . . . Children in the wind—hair floating, tossing, a miniature of the agitated Trees, below which they play'd—the elder whirling for joy, the one in petticoats, a fat Baby, eddying half willingly, half by the force of the Gust—driven backward, struggling forward—both drunk with the pleasure, both shouting their hymn of Joy."

If we look to the *Letters*,[2] where this passage is quoted almost verbatim, we discover that Coleridge is writing about his two sons. Their dance and the dance of the trees seem to exist within the ambience of the God in whom we live and move and have our being. Mircea Eliade, in *The Sacred and the Profane* (1968), has written of an "unquenchable ontological thirst". Religious man thirsts for a fulness of being that he finds by identifying himself with some primordial act of creation. According to Eliade, such a man desires "to live in a pure and holy cosmos, as it was in the beginning, when it came fresh from the Creator's hands." Coleridge's Notebooks often enact the moment when thoughts enter the mind, words enter the mouth, inspiration articulates itself as Reason through landscapes, dream images, private murmurings with the self. The primary moments of pre-verbal creation are relived as a basis for verbal creation.

A BLIND BOY, aged nine, whom I am seeing as a therapist, in part prompted these thoughts. He speaks a foreign language which I speak with some difficulty. He is blind and I—if not exactly dumb—am unaccustomedly inarticulate. Yet we seem to communicate. One day he was distressed, I think because we had only one more meeting before the long holidays. With all his heart, he was loudly wailing and weeping and shaking his fists in the air. In the work-room he wanted to be led to the bed-sofa. When I suggested he was in this state because I was going away, he laid his head down on the pillow, held the pillow and rocked back and forth, making an agitated humming noise, incantatory, like the chanting of a Buddhist monk, as though his mouth noise and his circular sphere movement were attempts to communicate with something outside himself, a kind of tuning-in with the universe.

At the same time, the sound and the movement had the quality of someone shaping something good for themselves. I suggested he was trying to make something good in his mouth to make up for my going away, and he was pleased. The sound grew softer, more private, as though he was regulating its distance. Sometimes he changed the sound to a more broken, throat-rattling sound, as though untempering his act of tuning in. Or the tempered notes would modulate into

[2] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Collected Letters*, ed. E. L. Griggs (6 vols., 1959-1971).

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three notes, as though he were allowing a tune to form out of them. (He rejected this view.)

The sounds faded away. He began to laugh, rather malignly, and to hold on to his teeth. I indicated to him that he was behaving as though something bad had entered into him and he associated the badness with his teeth. He repeated with approval the words that something bad had entered into him. The feeding object (the sound) had become a weapon (teeth); and the weapon had become his whole body. He started to throw himself back on to the pillow, banging his head violently, shuddering his hands and stiffening his body as though in paroxysm. The session continued to unfold with oscillatory movements into coherence or destructiveness. He seemed to be using his body to work out pre-verbal conflicts.

On days less determined by holiday thoughts, he may rock back and forth, holding my hands and then put his fists tenderly into his eye sockets, as though he were trying to take me into him by a weaving action, so that I can fill his sockets with some apparatus for seeing. He touches his ears, as though wondering whether sight might be like hearing. He stretches out, seeking for some missing sense or unrealised potentiality.

450 Years of Solitude

Indigena Literature in Latin America—By WALLACE KAUFMAN

THE MAIN EVENT of the 1985 Latin American Book Fair at New York University was a reading by four writers. After Ernesto Cardenal, Nicaragua's Minister of Culture, and two Salvadorans had used up twice their allotted time and people had begun to escape the stuffy, hot auditorium, the moderator introduced a thin, brown young man who had been sitting patiently at the end of the speaker's table. The young man adjusted the microphone for his 5′ 2″ height. "I know you have been sitting here for two hours in this hot room", he told some 1,000 remaining listeners. "But we Mayans have been sitting in Central America waiting to speak to you for 450 years."

He ended his reading with a poem in which he stands on top of the World Trade Tower imagining himself "a prince of Tikal" or "a Mayan cosmonaut soaring high above his dreams". The next day around the stalls of the Book Fair visitors and publishers did not talk nearly as much about Cardenal, the good grey propaganda poet, as about Victor Dionicio Montejo, "that wonderful little Mayan guy from Guatemala".

Montejo's only book is a small-press edition of his retelling of an unrecorded Mayan legend. Magazines have begun to publish his poems, stories, and essays, and Curbstone Press of Connecticut has published a memoir about Montejo's life in Guatemala and a book of poems and fables. In his work-in-progress, *Guatemala: A Personal Memoir*, he describes growing up as an Indian in the Guatemala of the 1960s and 1970s. I have translated two paragraphs which describe how, a few weeks after civil war came to his remote mountain town, a gruesome incident epitomised their fears not only of violence but also for their identity as a people.

"One morning as several women were carrying their corn to the mill at dawn they passed through the centre of town. There sitting in a doorway was a naked man without a head. News of that apparition flew about town. Many people whose friends and family members had disappeared came to see the headless body. It was a robust, short man with brown skin. His hands had been cut off with a knife. That was all that was seen. His head was never found.

. . . It speaks to the heart of the people. The separation of the head from the body is the separation of the intelligence from flesh and blood. That man full of life, with colour of our race, strong, brown, from a family, with parents, with his own name—now nobody knows him. Now he is only a body decorated with ragged flags of blood drying on his wounds. Such is the scrapmeat of humanity. It is what all of us can be if we do not awake from this dream in which we are becoming as unrecognisable to ourselves as this headless man."

Whatever Montejo's future as a writer, he is already important as part of a small vanguard of Latin American Indian writers, most of them the first literate people in their communities.

What these indigenous writers have to say after more than 450 years of silence could change the future of Latin America. (In Latin America the word Indian or *indio* is generally derogatory; both natives and judicious Latinos use *indigena*.) The reasons for the importance of indigenous writers are the special place writers have in Latin American political movements, and the number of indigenous people in Latin America.

From Mexico to Tierra del Fuego, some 30 million indigenous people are beginning to demand a voice in government. In Bolivia and Guatemala they are a clear majority. They are the backbone of both Guatemala's army and its rural guerrilla forces. Indigenous people form a larger

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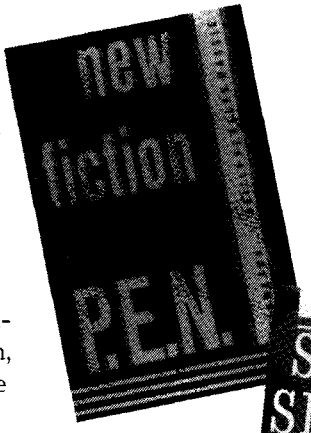

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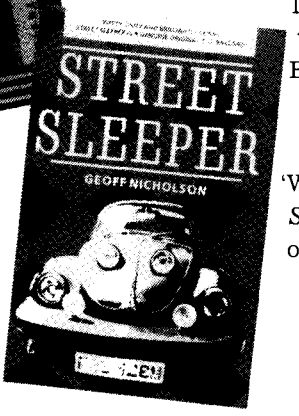

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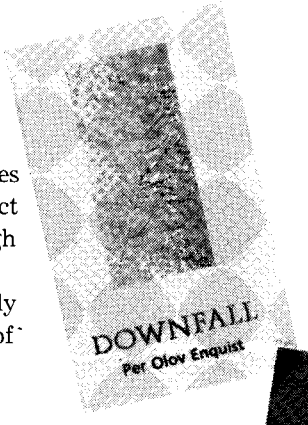

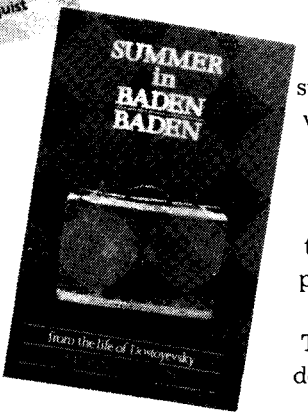

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From the life of Dostoyevsky
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Tsypkin died in Moscow in 1982. He had devoted his life to Dostoyevsky's writings and *Summer in Baden-Baden* is the culmination of his work.

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QUARTET BOOKS

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portion of the populations of Colombia, Peru and Ecuador than the blacks do in the US. They occupy most of the resource-rich eastern slopes of the Andes. Nicaragua's concern about its relatively small indigenous population recognises the fact that the Atlantic zone they control contains over 56% of the country's territory. The great majority of Mexicans have indigenous blood, and indigenous communities still maintain over fifty native languages.

Victor Montejo's success at the Book Fair is no guarantee that the doors have been opened for indigenous writers. If we ask why some 30 million people have yet to produce a major writer, we discover some important facts about Latin America. Casual observers might blame poverty and illiteracy. A more positive explanation is that the literature of indigenous people is oral.

Illiteracy continues and the oral literature is still vibrant, but indigenous societies have produced notable writers. Most of them died 400 years ago.

In the 16th century, colonial Government and the Church pursued a policy of cultural extinction with all the vigour of the Inquisition and Renaissance arrogance. In Peru, Garcilaso the Inca wrote a famous history of the Conquest and called for an indigenous brotherhood in both Americas. In Guatemala and Yucatan, clandestine Mayan writers laboured away rewriting what they remembered from their conquered priests and from the piles of hieroglyphic books burned by Franciscan and Dominican missionaries. They left Yucatan's books of Chilam Balam and the *Songs of Dzibalché* and Guatemala's great scripture, *Popul Vuh*. Some Mayans still remember when priests were burning old books whose authors and contents we shall never know.

Illiteracy and poverty have never been as great an obstacle to literature as despair. In the early years of the Conquest, the Indians still had hope. By 1700 it had been crushed and would flower again only in brief and often bloody rebellions. Controlling the "Indian problem" became a cornerstone of European development from Canada to Chile, and remained so until this century. Then came the anthropologists and archaeologists.

These scholars were more intent on studying indigenous people than in helping them politically or economically. Their scholarship, however, did serve to place a value on indigenous culture. The nature of scholarship, of course, is study, not action. Unfortunately, the greater the value of a thing studied, the more likely it is to remain an object of curiosity rather than the recipient of human sympathy and help.

Scholars today remain more intent on studying indigenous culture and recording oral literature than on helping the people who create that literature. At the Fourth International Conference on Latin American Indian Literature in Yucatan in early January 1986, some one hundred scholars paid little attention to the four or five indigenous writers—all from Mexico. (It had not occurred to the organisers that the creators of the indigenous literature from which they make their living and reputation cannot afford air fares.)

The Mayan bibliographer and poet Genaro Pool Jimenez did begin to read his poems at one session. After the first poem the assembled scholars used up the rest of the time debating among themselves the relative merits and mechanics of oral versus written literature. The same scholars have been painfully tangled in argument on how to write, type, and print indigenous languages. Too often they use an orthography of linguistic signs and symbols which mocks the resources of local printers, not to mention the understanding of any non-academic writer or reader.

In Ecuador, Quechua descendents of the Inca empire are trying to produce a standard spelling for their branch of the language that is spoken along the spine of the Andes from Colombia to Chile. Carmen Chuquin, a native speaker and now a linguist at the University of Wisconsin, says that obstacles to it have included political objections to the letters K and W. Since these letters are not used in the Spanish alphabet most familiar in Latin America, some activists consider them a form of Yankee imperialism. Worried that the committee will come up with some complex compromise, Chuquin says, "I don't want to have to relearn Quechua in order to read it."

Paradoxically, the most successful efforts to open the doors for indigenous writers comes from a group criticised harshly by liberals and radicals for destroying indigenous culture. Twenty-nine years ago, on an island in Brazil's Araguaia, an Amazon tributary, the Summer Institute of Linguistics founded a school to teach primitive Karajá fishing people how to read and write their own language. The SIL's resident scholars operate like a Peace Corps for indigenous languages. David and Gretchen Fortune, linguists from Indiana, have worked and lived with the Karajá people since 1958. They firmly believe that the Karajá will only be able to choose their place in Brazilian society if they learn to read, write, and respect their own language and the culture from which it comes. Their task has not been easy in a society which has distinct dialects for men and women—almost a third of the native vocabulary being spoken by only one sex.

The Summer Institute of Linguistics' efforts are besieged from outside by critics who believe they are only missionaries softening up indigenous people for oppression by the multinational corporations. While SIL's scholars often work under contract to national governments, a great share of their funds comes from corporations, often channelled through the Wycliffe Bible Translators. Since one of their tasks is to translate the Bible, and since they are more popular than the purely religious missionary groups, they come under heavy and sometimes successful attack. Mexico cancelled SIL contracts several years ago, when formerly cooperative Mexican anthropologists turned into critics. At the conference in Yucatan the local Communist Party handed out leaflets lambasting SIL, although offering no substantive criticism.

For their own part the Fortunes are proud that their students write their own texts in Karajá, preserving their mythology and knowledge of natural history. Karajá writers

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are producing a series of booklets on important plants and animals. A few years ago, the publication of one of their legends about the importance of their island stopped a new highway from taking their land. Last year, a young man whose only name is Ijarruru was writing and delivering his own political speeches as he campaigned for a seat in Brazil's Congress. If he wins, he will replace an illiterate Indian hand-picked by white politicians.

WHATEVER the background of the debate about SIL, it is clear that the Fortunes are exceptions in the scholarly world. Most academics are not as interested in contemporary indigenous writers as in oral literature and literature about indigenous people. The journals are full of oral literature, often bearing the name of the collector and transcriber more prominently than the teller. Scholarly meetings more often discuss *indigenistas* than *indigenas*. *Indigenistas* are writers who use *indigena* themes and materials, often idealising the subject in a literature of the noble savage.

The poet Genaro Pool Jimenez says of scholars and film-makers, "They arrive from Mexico, Germany, France and the United States and they bring their expensive tape-recorders and cameras. I wonder what it means. They say good-bye, and they leave nothing in the community."

Indigenous writers have come to expect even less from the governments of their own countries. In the past, Latin American governments have taken the racist attitude that indigenous people do not have the capacity or the need to read and write. Often this has been simply a cover for a deliberate policy of keeping their least supportive subjects ignorant.

In recent years, schools have reached more communities, but they usually plunge children into the unfamiliar words and sounds of Spanish and Portuguese. This shock makes many think any writing is too difficult for them. Survivors often get the impression that their languages are not worthy of being written. To impoverished parents, five- and six-year-olds are often more valuable at home or in the fields than learning a language they will seldom if ever have to read or write. The result is continued high levels of illiteracy.

Since Franciscan monks burned Mayan texts in Central America 450 years ago, illiteracy, especially in indigenous languages, has been a *de facto* service to repressive governments. Literacy and literature, on the other hand, even more than in North America's colonial era and national history, have been important instruments of change. Within the Latin American trend towards democracy and revolution, we should expect to see Indian writers taking their place alongside Mario Vargas Llosa, Carlos Fuentes, Gabriel Marquez, Isabel Allende, Ernesto Cardenal, Sergio Ramirez, and Octavio Paz.

LITERARY HISTORY, however, mirrors an unfortunate pattern of political history. Indigenous people have often initiated movements for political reform or fought side by side with Latinos in wars for independence. When the fruits of success were distributed, the Indians got very little. So in the present boom in Latin American literature, almost every successful writer uses *indigena* themes, history, mythology and characters, but writers and publishers have found more room for the "primitive", illiterate *indigenas* as a subject than as colleagues.

The odds, as always, are overwhelmingly against the indigenous writer. With change blowing across Latin America, hope has been reborn. Some foundations are providing money for indigenous people to preserve their culture, and indigenous people are taking advantage of new freedom to help themselves. With guerrilla movements finding fertile ground among alienated indigenous people, government assistance in Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru and Brazil has become more substantive.

For indigenous people themselves, scholarship must often come before literature or at least combine with it. Yucatan's 50-year old Academia de la Lengua Maya is a voluntary association of scholars and writers who run classes for students interested in writing in Mayan and studying the culture. One of the Academy's goals is to establish the language's unique literary potential. President Juan Ramon Bastarrachea Manzano and eleven other of the Academy's members have just completed a dictionary of modern Yucatec Mayan, the language still spoken by almost one million people. The Academy has also translated the great Quichè classic, *Popul Vuh*, into their own dialect. Ermilo Yah Pech is editing a Spanish/Mayan text of letters which tell

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the Mayan side of the great rebellion, the Caste War, which lasted almost 50 years until it petered out on the Yucatan coast in 1901 near the site of that least Mayan of all settlements, Cancun.

In Bolivia the Aymara Foundation, funded from the USA, is developing an indigenous alphabet, providing scholarships to Aymara students, and publishing the works of Aymara writers.

Most indigenous writing still takes place in simple schoolrooms, and most of it does not go far beyond a kind of folk scholarship, transcribing oral history and culture. Indigenous writers and scholars believe that the most promising fact is that their people are learning to read and write about their own culture in their own languages. This, they say, is a necessary rebuilding of the cultural confidence and sensitivity upon which every writer in the world depends.

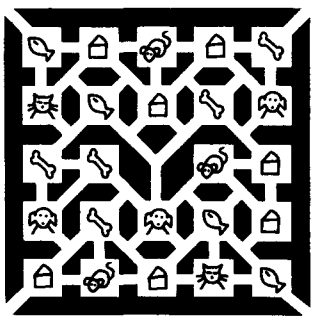
Genaro Pool Jimenez considers scholarship more important than his poetry. A member of the Academy of the Mayan Language, he does not dream of becoming a best-selling author. He says: "I hope I can be an agent of change, and make it possible for our children to continue to think in their own language."

Indigenous people are writing not only for each other but for the rest of the world. Radio, television, and tourism (both expeditionary and revolutionary) have convinced remote villages that they are part of the "global village".

The 450 years of silent waiting Victor Montejo described may be about to end. Nothing promises that Ijarruru or Montejo or any indigenous writer will take a place alongside Gabriel Marquez or Vargas Llosa or Machado. However, if indigenous languages and cultures are as valuable as so many scholars and outside writers believe, we may one day discover what it would have been like if *Moby Dick* had been written by Queequeg—or by Ijarruru.

Plain Truths & Home Cooking

Recent Poetry—By John Mole



Some years ago in an interview, Douglas Dunn, whose *Selected Poems*[1] has just appeared, made the following observation about Ted Hughes, who has recently published another sumptuous little volume, with full-colour illustrations by Leonard Baskin:[2]

> "I think Ted Hughes is probably a traditional English nature poet in his heart, but because of contemporary humbug, as well as the humiliations and upheavals of the twentieth century, and the distortions upon the imagination which they've produced—the affront of recent history—he's been deflected away from attention to nature and creatures, which I think is his love, in order to orchestrate feelings within a kind of Lawrentian ideology: it shouldn't really be necessary."

Will the real traditional English nature poet please stand up. There have been so many, attentive to the surface of the seasons, to social change from common and cottage to municipal gardens, and to the still sad music of humanity; not to speak of the moralists of *hortus inclusus* and the celebrants of the force through the green fuse.

Ted Hughes, for all the deflection Dunn rightly points out, has always returned his attention to nature. Indeed, in even his most appalling mutations there have been moments of exquisite, exact transcription. It's not so much in his heart that he's a nature poet as in his nervous system, and in *Flowers and Insects* (some Birds and a pair of Spiders) he's as alert and responsively startled as he has ever been. With him, contemplation is quickly transformed into reciprocal animation. The flower of a cyclamen floats free of its neatly earthed, domestic containment in a bowl and becomes "the lambent, electric shock-waves/Of our simply, quietly gazing at it".

Hughes is the conductor of shock-waves. He's also a microbiologist with a fine ear. In "Sketch of a Goddess", burying its face in an iris, in "the very beard of her ovaries", an overpowered bee "deafens itself/In a dreadful belly-cry—just out of human hearing". Watching a pair of spiders through a magnifying glass, he focuses on the female's

gentle
Sinister dance. All legs clinging
Except for those leading two, which tapped on the web,
Trembling it, I thought, like a fly, to attract
The immobile, upside-down male, near the frame,
Only an inch from her. He moved away,
Turning ready to flee, I guessed. Maybe
Fearful of her intentions and appetites:
Doubting. But her power, focussing,
Making no error after the millions of years
Perfecting this art, turned him round
At a distance of two inches, and hung him
Upside down, head under, belly towards her.

---

[1] *Selected Poems 1964-1983*. By Douglas Dunn. Faber, £4.95.
[2] *Flowers and Insects*. By Ted Hughes. Illustrated by Leonard Baskin. Faber, £7.95.

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One reads on, hooked by an evolutionary thriller—"So, I imagined, here is the famous murder"—or moves out of the *huis clos* to sweeping spaces where a tern is "swimming in the wind", appropriating all languages to become sheer articulate motion.

He hangs,

A blown tatter, a precarious word
In the mouth of ocean pronouncements.
His meaning has no margin. He shudders
To the tips of his tail-tines.

Momentarily, his lit scrap is a shriek.

For all his imaginative energy and affirmation, Hughes's universe is full of shrieks which cannot, as Dunn indicates, be dissociated from those "distortions upon the imagination" produced by the "humiliations and upheavals of the twentieth century". Dunn's own work is more thoroughly civic, though certainly not narrowly parochial. As he acknowledges in that same interview, he has always thrived on melancholy, but this has been far from disabling. Where Hughes, one feels, would view melancholy as an indulgence, for Dunn it is a vital source. Not an English, or even a British, melancholy ("Britain bores me"), but a European one which can be heard everywhere in his cadences.

He favours the kind of surrealist (and symbolist) method which reinforces social observation and insight, which—as he puts it—"carries with it a whole world of comment and narrative". It allows a generous accumulation of scenic dissolves within solidly constructed stanzas. In his early "Terry Street" poems it carried the effect well beyond that of mere disenchanted documentation:

They are a part of the silence of places,
The people who live here, working, falling asleep,
In a place removed one style in time outwith
The trend of places. They are like a lost tribe.
Dogs bark when strangers come, with rent books, or
free gifts.

The cadence of Mallarmé's "*l'adieu suprême des mouchoirs*" can be heard in "the silence of places". And Dunn's later work, however closely personal its source, finds the individual voice always committed to community in its widest, aspirational sense. The close of "An Address on the Destitution of Scotland" shows how effectively he manages a rhetoric which verges on the lofty but does not betray the needs of its subject:

Share with me, then, the sad glugs in your bottles;
Throw a stolen spud for me on the side-embers.
Allow me to pull up a brick, and to sit beside you
In this nocturne of modernity, to speak of the dead,
Of the creatures loping from their dens of extinction.
Who are you waiting for? The stern mountain-preacher
In his coat of biblical night? I have seen him.
He sleeps in a kiln, out of the way of dragoons;
And I met a subversive optimist, at Sanquhar.
Permit me, then, to join your circle around your fire
In this midden of warm faces and freezing backs.
Sing me your songs in the speech of timber and horse.

In Hughes and Dunn we have established masters of *cosmos* and *civitas*. Paul Muldoon[3] is an emergent master of elegant vanishing tricks. His curiously evasive, even sometimes wilfully oblique poems are, at the same time, enticing, sensuous, and charged with a kind of compulsive secrecy always just on the verge of revelation. A characteristic Muldoon lyric is as cryptic as it is intimate. It invites the reader's complicity like a wishbone, provoking a nimbus of shared apprehensions and desires but making an enigma of its own designs as if it were bad luck to give them away. The title poem of Muldoon's third collection *Why Brownlee Left* is a clear example of this procedure:

Why Brownlee left, and where he went,
Is a mystery even now.
For if a man should have been content
It was him; two acres of barley,
One of potatoes, four bullocks,
A milker, a slated farmhouse.
He was last seen going out to plough
On a March morning, bright and early.

By noon Brownlee was famous;
They had found all abandoned, with
The last rig unbroken, his pair of black
Horses, like man and wife,
Shifting their weight from foot to
Foot, and gazing into the future.

That gaze into the future, both intense and listless, is brilliantly contrived to absorb the whole poem into the source of its mystery. The effect is not unlike encountering a grounded *Marie Celeste*—all the properties are still there, the detailed images of a purpose, but the poet has absconded along with Brownlee from the poem in which they met. The reader is just too late to catch him, and is left to puzzle over the unanswerable question.

Muldoon is a serious writer who plays at being one step ahead. His subjects touch on important issues of history, sectarian politics, identity and faith, but for much of the time he is a poetic secret agent who writes with invisible ink. Even in his more expansive, hallucinatory narratives, "Immram" and "The More a Man Has the More a Man Wants", length only compounds the mystery. It simply takes longer to wake from the dream—tight-packed stanzas of libidinous fantasy, surreal juxtapositions, and breakneck scene changes—and realise that it *was* a dream.

Where responsibilities begin is another matter, and it is hard to avoid the impression that Muldoon sometimes indulges in abuse of the allusive. He writes with the sort of nonchalant authority which expects you to take your own bafflement on trust, although when he does attempt direct transcriptions of personal experience he shapes anecdote into emblem with memorable results:

Uncle Pat was telling us how the B-Specials

[3] *Selected Poems 1968-1983*. By PAUL MULDOON. Faber, £3.95.

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had stopped him one night somewhere near Ballygawley
and smashed his bicycle

and made him sing the Sash and curse the Pope of Rome.
They held a pistol so hard against his forehead
there was still the mark of an O when he got home.

MULDOON'S FELLOW IRISHMAN, James Simmons, is a very different kind of poet. The troubadour of the Heaney generation, his poems are robust, candid, vulnerable, by turns tender and aggressive. They chronicle his life, his energy—on a steady back-burner even when he is at his most contemplative—and his principles in the face of domestic trouble.[4]

"Responsibility must be particular,/not to every creature under the sun,/not universal love, but cleaving to one." So he writes in "On Circe's Island", celebrating "this stunning stranger" who "kept me from my own" in the same breath as "In guilt I remembered my own wife and my son". His humane, moral but never judgmental verse thrives on the conflict of emotions, guilty recognition, and passionate reconciliation—"I sing of natural forces,/marriages, divorces", of being "ruefully invigorated,/at home at sea", and when he addresses himself directly to the suffering of his community the awareness that responsibility must be particular results in some remarkable poems which fuse the domestic with a fearful sense that a world elsewhere is on the doorstep:

That day there flew and fell
from astonished victims eyebrow, bone and entrail,
like stars in the sky, like snowflakes, like nuts in May,
like a meadow of daisies, like butts from an ashtray.

Familiar things, you might brush against or tread
upon in the daily round, were glistening red
with slaughter the hero caused, though he had gone.
By proxy his bomb exploded, his valour shone.

The only compromise Simmons is prepared to understand is the one he acknowledges in a fine poem, "Didn't He Ramble", dedicated to his friend and fellow jazz fan, Michael Longley:

Jazz is a compromise:
you take the first tune in your head and play
until it's saying what you want to say.
"I ain't got no diplomas", said Satchmo,
"I look into my heart and blow."

Simmons himself has got diplomas—he's a university lecturer and improvises inventively on literary themes as in a series of "King Lear" poems—but it's looking into his own heart and blowing straight out that he does best, and I'm sure he must be aware that Satchmo, for all his lack of academic learning, was paraphrasing the last line of the first sonnet of Philip Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella*.

ANDREW WATERMAN[5] is another university lecturer—from the same campus, in fact (the New University of Ulster in Coleraine), and he shares with Simmons an addiction to that larger campus, the University of Life. He, too, makes a virtue of being at home at sea, of running "into Life's left-hook/ absurdly often". His earlier work is set in the country of his childhood and youth, and it finds him "journeying often across the heart of England", celebrating his love of Edward Thomas (often in that poet's cadences) with a strong sense of his own secret sharer, of that "other" which Thomas has bequeathed to him. Spiritual exile has always been his theme, an ambivalent attitude towards the suburban Eden with its "water-sprinklers rotating for ever" (a recurring image), his origins, and a succession of bedsits:

The massive pink door shuddered to let me in.
And I was led up past landing kitchenettes,
and round and up to a slope-roofed room, low bed,
bed-table, tilting wardrobe, cheap bowl fire.
"That's it, and there's the meter." Then,
"You're young", he added, "where is your home?"
"Home?" I replied. "Home is where I find myself."

In John Clare's affecting phrase, Waterman finds himself "homeless at home" wherever home is for him, and he compensates with a fierce, necessary emphasis on friendship, loyalty and betrayal. In later poems which allude to marriage, a court case, custody, and are almost overwhelmingly full of a possessive tenderness for his young son (to whom the book is dedicated), the tone is sometimes grotesquely bitter ("that drivelling judge") but mainly stoical—"You're what you make, this mess no paradise".

Personal detail moves in and out of generalised statement about the human condition, and the verse—accomplished to a high pitch of virtuosity—is, by turns, poignant and grandiose. The loss of "family perspectives" tends to get submerged by forceful but attenuated polemic as if the pain (in Simmons's phrase) of "clinging to one" were seeking refuge in statements about the universal:

Art seeks to forge atoning sense
and shapeliness from violence
and hurt we may be powerless
in life to help. These lines confess
sheer impotence, as they complete
their formal pattern, to defeat
or solace discord which has ripped
you from your home and father, stripped
away known places, play and friends;
yet while it cannot make amends
for wrong endured, the poem sustains
truths life would void; by taking pains
composes our essential form,
inviolable through the storm.

Andrew Waterman is an uneven but highly intelligent poet for whom the troubles are, in every sense, on the door-

[4] *Poems 1956-1986*. By JAMES SIMMONS. Bloodaxe Books, £12.95, paper £5.95.
[5] *Selected Poems*. By ANDREW WATERMAN. Carcanet, £3.95.

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step, and his *Selected Poems* is an impressive volume.

TWO ATTRACTIVE NEW collections from Peterloo Poets are David Sutton's *Flints*[6] and *Trees in Sheep Country* by Anna Adams.[7] Their virtues are those of scrupulous local attentiveness, a close reading of what David Sutton calls the "domestic unfamiliar text". In "Postcard from Pembrokeshire" he contrasts himself with "My friends, who go so lightly here and there,/. . . and never care/That none of it is yours":

I know you'd laugh to see me here perplexed
Still after two weeks by the rocks and seas
Of one domestic unfamiliar text,
Missing my rooted etymologies
Of Chiltern beech. Yet there's no other way
For us, the slow ones, who would understand
The language of the summer clouds that lay
Their shivering allusions on the land.

We ignore, or lose patience with, the slow ones at our peril. Their poems are unspectacular, modest, and traditional in form. They sit four-square on the page, making pleasant conversation, rooted in reassuring common sense, often proverbially wise but lighting up again and again with vivid felicities of observation and phrasing which give the lie to readers who may feel they have heard it all before. These poems are, generically, the well-weathered English stock, feet on the ground and head in the shivering allusions of those summer clouds. The risks they take are minimal, but their deceptive steadiness is so full of the incidental delights of recognition that they often achieve considerably more than the awful daring of those moments of surrender which bring in the diminishing returns of febrile excitement.

David Sutton unapologetically offers "Small Incident in Library", "Another Small Incident", etc., but small is far from minimal. In "Blooding", for example, he describes an incident on a car journey with his children where he comes across a hare:

back legs
Smashed quite flat: a stuck moth, fluttering,
And yet not dead, but panicking wild-eyed,
Arching in the dazzle, pushing up
On boxer's shoulders, falling, pushing up.
No one spoke. My children looked and waited.
Me? What competence had I in death?
I started off to let the car roll forward,
All set to do it in the modern way,
A filthy casual obliteration,
And could not: took a spanner and knelt down
Saying words. The great eyes rolled, went quiet.
I lifted it, the body cold as dew
Before I even laid it in the bracken.
No more singing. At the door my wife
Met us: "What on earth . . ." My little one:
"Daddy couldn't help it", ran upstairs.

[6] *Flints*. By DAVID SUTTON. Peterloo Poets, £3.00.
[7] *Trees in Sheep Country*. By ANNA ADAMS. Peterloo Poets, £4.50.

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This is quietly moving and unobtrusively skilful. "My little one", so nearly a sentimentality, avoids being so by gathering strength from its association with the small death which has preceded it. Try placing the emphasis. "My" or "little"? That's the genuine, occasional question raised by a real, if otherwise unexceptional, poem.

Anna Adams's particular gift is for empathy with the slow unfolding of organic growth. Favouring tight forms, she relishes the opportunity they offer for manipulation and disclosure. In "Flowering Berberis and Bees", an intricate variation on the pattern of the villanelle exactly matches her subject:

I am a world, the only world I know,
though humming outer-space-ships visit me
with cryptic messages. They come and go

tickling suggestively. Like yellow snow
my loosened garments fall continuously
from canopy to earth. From space I know

I grope towards blue summer air; I grow
while tenor angels sing of mystery
and probe my roses as they come and go.

If there are other trees that blossom so,
whose sulphur buds unfold successively,
then others know the ecstasy I know.

She can be prosaically sententious when she gets hold of an idea and works it out through a succession of neat, creative-writing-course metaphors ("A garden is a book whose daily leaves,/turned over by the sun, relate the year"), but when she trusts to her delight in language and the possibilities of received form she is very good.

More quirkily adventurous but equally firm on the ground are the poems by Frank Redpath and Douglas Houston. Redpath, whose small volume *To the Village*[8] deserves more attention than it appears to be receiving (despite an enthusiastic introduction by Douglas Dunn), was born in Hull where he has spent most of his life, and like the poet who put Hull on the map he is capable of distilling a lyricism from the compassionate shrug—"A moral lesson here? A sign?//Perhaps not—":

But looking up I see the birds:
Grey trills and ornaments along a crest.
They share what he endures: a quite absurd
Hold on the thin edge of the everyday. . . .
And dangerous too, for when they fly how quick
They're hurled—and he; no matter how you look
You'll get a wink, no more, before they're gone. . . .

In "There" (a nice counterpart, and obvious allusion, to Larkin's "Here") Redpath looks closely, with a keen mass-observer's eye, at an unexceptional landscape, carefully accumulating "small signs to say you're there":

Evidence
Of other people's lives, they warm
And quicken, stave off death and satisfy.

In "Seen from the Train" a rain-rinsed vista achieves "a supernatural ordinariness", a kind of heightened reality which approaches the visionary; and there are several moments of this order in Redpath's enjoyable collection.

For Douglas Houston, a young poet now living in Hull, ordinariness is touched by the surreal rather than the supernatural. It is also infiltrated by a strong individual sense of politics and recent history. One poem in his first collection, *With the Offal Eaters*,[9] carries an epigraph from Auden—"Another time has other lives to live"—but there is, for Houston as for Auden, no time like the present for locating and focusing global anxieties:

The glory of the world is passing already
With white blossoms dropping from the may's laden
boughs.
The heels of the man with shattered kneecaps crush them
To a moist translucency. Dead prisoners gather
On the green outside the Methodist Hall to hear
A moving address on human rights delivered
By a visiting Belgian milkman, who breaks down
When whispers inform him of a lost football match.
People who happened to be listening to radios
Maintained their politic silence while descending
To shelters now crowded and firmly closed.

Perhaps Houston's most immediately approachable poems are his least original. He has learnt much about writing of family loyalties and heredity from Tony Harrison, who might almost have ghost-written "Dead Man's Shoes":

I'm happy in my socks, but, de rigueur,
A man needs shoes to strut his stuff today.
I'm keeping those calf numbers to ensure,
If necessary, my feet will look O.K.

But the best work in *With the Offal Eaters* is distinctive, and Houston is without doubt a poet to watch.

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[8] *To the Village*. By Frank Redpath. The Sonus Press (17 Pearson Avenue, Hull HU5 2SX), £3.00.

[9] *With the Offal Eaters*. By Douglas Houston. Bloodaxe Books, £3.95.

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The medieval illuminator of manuscripts who explores, justifies, and acknowledges the precious limitations of his craft in "Apologia", from Lawrence Sail's new collection, *Devotions*,[10] is, at the same time, a spokesman for this poet's own scrupulous self-awareness:

I do not pretend, as the truly ruthless do,
That any pain can be contracted to fit
The fluency of words or shining paint—
Or that the world's my cloister. All my art,
Beneath rich foliage, curling metaphor,
Commutes between God's world and the trappist heart.

Sail could not be truly ruthless if he tried, nor even pretend to the kind of violence which would seize on experience and bundle it into the confessional. Like the "God in white gloves", in his poem "Snooker Players", who tenderly "retrieves each fallen planet with love" and replaces it on the baize, he attempts to assert symmetry and balance against all the odds. He knows well enough that just beyond the brightly-lit table "in the framing/Darkness, doubt dogs the game".

The best poems in *Devotions* are marked by an anxious tenderness for his children, and an acute sense of loss, as in "Hallowe'en Lantern":

Crackling waxily, profane,
Neckless, a drunken dome,
It stood between curtain and pane
Facing the frost or the dark rain
Through which I shivered home.

My mind's a blank. What went on
Behind that grin, in those banging
Rooms which belong to no one?
My children will go, my wife has gone—
In the darkness I see a face, hanging.

Paradoxically, that desolate, declarative sentence, "My mind's a blank", in so unexpectedly recalling Robert Lowell's "My mind's not right" from "Skunk Hour", serves to emphasise the compelling orderliness of Sail's art. Lowell's statement ends a stanza *in extremis* whereas Sail's begins one, moving neatly into the balance of the closing lines. There is no exhilaration, nothing ruthless, only a quiet honesty, undemonstrative but affecting.

When Sail, as he does on occasion, puts his quick mind through its paces merely for the sake of exercise, the balance does tend to become balancing tricks and produce elegant poems which—in Wallace Stevens's telling phrase—are too much themselves, but there are fewer of these than in his previous volumes, and *Devotions* is an excellent collection by a fine and undervalued poet.

As I was reading Lawrence Sail I found myself recalling a line from Fleur Adcock's "An Illustration to Dante" in

[10] *Devotions*. By Lawrence Sail. Secker & Warburg, £5.95.

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which, countering Ruskin's comment that Rossetti "didn't know how to do hail", she observes, "Well, he could do tenderness". Well, so can she, though with a sharp, disenchanted sense of reality underscoring it. Her latest collection, *The Incident Book*,[11] contains some extraordinary chilling moments which could themselves be Dante-esque illustrations, though not by Rossetti:

> *Here is a hole full of men shouting*
> *"I don't love you. I loved you once*
> *but I don't now. I went off you,*
> *or I was frightened, or my wife was pregnant,*
> *or I found I preferred men instead."*

Her recollections of childhood are witty and poignant, a knee-high view of adult behaviour or, as in the excellent "The High Tree", that secretive, omniscient over-view of the shy child on the verge of discovering her identity:

> *It was a refuge. When you sat in its branches*
> *threatening strangers passed you by.*
>
> *Nothing could find you. Even friendly people,*
> *if you invited them to try,*
>
> *couldn't climb very far. It made them dizzy:*
> *they'd shiver and shut their eyes and cry,*
>
> *and you'd have to guide them down again, backwards,*
> *wishing they hadn't climbed so high.*

The Incident Book also contains a set of poems, "Thatcherland", which observes a Britain "going anonymous" with wry accuracy and a valedictory irony, a marvellous poem about love in middle-age ("Kissing") and, finest of all, "The Keepsake", an elegiac, anecdotal meditation in memory of her friend Pete Laver.

PETER SCUPHAM'S HAS always been a poetry of tutelar deities, and at the centre of his new book. *Out Late*,[12] there is a substantial set of variations on "A Midsummer Night's Dream". It is ritualistic, ornamental, haunted by disembodied voices and spectral groupings around the maypole and the Great Oak. The whole ambitious sequence is a synthesis of Scupham's affiliations and concerns. Herne the Hunter presides over a box of delights which is also a Pandora's Box releasing the world's ills in our midst. It manages to be both antiquarian and contemporary. Sustained meditations alternate with shorter lyrics, and Scupham's inclusive, layered imagination shifts continually between an old England of custom and ceremony and the terrors of a world alienated from nature and nurture, a world with its "ribboned maypole blunted into missile" and "an acid rain/Eating the heart out of the sluggish lake". Like Auden, with whose "The Sea and the Mirror" his Dream invites comparison, Scupham understands what it means to be "lost in a haunted wood", but in a key poem (dedicated to Geoffrey Grigson) which opens the volume he points to those "signs and seals" which speak "with riddling tongue/Of what we were, and are", and his own poems amount to talismans of faith and doubt, carefully wrought, polished and arranged into a collection which we are the better for sharing with him.

Many of his finest poems, such as "A House of Geraniums", grow out of meditations upon those 'wraiths who keep their patience . . ./Who if we find them voices, only say:/'We were; you are. Why should you ask for more?'":

> *The dead are anything that sighs in millions:*
> *The tossing flower-heads of Queen Anne's Lace,*
> *Moths trawling the dark, those waifs of snow*
> *Flocked against glass, formations of the night*
>
> *Which grows towards us: ghosts talking of ghosts,*
> *Compounded of old walls, old bones, old stories,*
> *Watching an inch of sun slip to the West,*
> *Playing the revenant to this house and garden*
>
> *Sleepy with cats down a remembered lane*
> *Where unaccustomed eyes look cleanly through us;*
> *Pity our grey hair, unfamiliar pauses,*
> *Our tongues which trip so lightly over our graves.*

WHEN WONDERING whether he should ask for more or not, Peter Scupham is at his most accomplished and memorable. In a lighter vein he writes excellent parodies. Clive James, whose vein is often lighter, though his concerns weigh in on the heavy side, does not. His real gift is for the lampoon. There's a merciless charm about his copious productivity. *Other Passports*[13] is an overweight juggernaut of a book, great fun to dip into but monotonously smart when read at length. James is a champ for whom every line must pack a punch. His range of interests and learning is formidable, and he demonstrates his mastery of demanding verse forms, often pointing out that he is doing so. Certainly not one of the slow ones, he's quick to hitch his verse wagons to rising stars and the glitterati dazzle on his pages. Armchair readers who want to know where things are at in the metropolitan scene (and in the great Cosmopolitan Elsewhere) will greatly enjoy being entertained by James if his cast of thousands doesn't crowd them out.

Clive James's knack of being at the point where intelligence and energy coincide has made him a prominent supporter of the poetry of Charles Johnston whose *Selected Poems II*[14] contains his outstanding autobiographical poem "In Praise of Gusto". Johnston, a distinguished administrator who died last April, is perhaps best known for his translation of *Eugene Onegin*, and in "In Praise of Gusto" the Pushkin stanza

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[11] *The Incident Book*. By FLEUR ADCOCK. Oxford University Press, £3.95.

[12] *Out Late*. By PETER SCUPHAM. Oxford University Press, £4.95.

[13] *Other Passports: Poems 1958-1985*. By CLIVE JAMES. Cape, £9.95.

[14] *Selected Poems II* or *Writers on the Edge*. By CHARLES JOHNSTON. Published for Charles Johnston by The Bodley Head, £4.50.

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alternates with the Spenserian. Throughout the volume, which also contains dramatic monologues spoken by classical authors who lived on the edge of times of social upheaval, a worldly scholarship is pressed into civil service. Johnston's free verse is as supple, resonant, and finely tuned to the speaking voice as his use of complex forms is authoritatively relaxed. His bequest is

> *The eclectic taste equipped to find*
> *Delight in movements of the mind,*
> *Yet open to the contribution*
> *Of the external world of sense,*
> *The active verb, the present tense.*

Of the many other books that have come my way I'd particularly recommend R. S. Thomas's *Experimenting with an Amen*,[15] in which he continues with unflagging dedication to push belief to the edge of doubt and then miraculously retrieve it. Also Jack Clemo's rugged, wrestling *A Different Drummer*,[16] in which he engages with the strenuous non-conformist inner life of a number of his spiritual heroes; and an engrossing and very affecting enterprise by the young Scottish poets Kathleen Jamie and Andrew Greig. This is *A Flame in your Heart*[17] which is set in 1940 (twenty-two and eleven years, respectively, before either poet was born) and, through a series of poems which explore the courtship, passionate apprehensions and fate of Ken, a Spitfire pilot, and his girl-friend Katie, recreates the uncertain and therefore intense atmosphere of wartime with uncanny accuracy. This is one of Katie's (Kathleen Jamie's) poems:

> *If you knew that little force*
> *when I press stamps, then unthinking*
> *watch my letter fall into the box . . .*
>
> *That gentle touch*
> *I feel beneath my ears*
> *as you raise my face to yours . . .*
>
> *I still kiss you, though I know*
> *that soft pressing of the thumb*
> *is all it takes to kill a man.*

Finally, a welcome to the new magazine *Numbers*,[18] which includes a selection of R. L. Barth's Viet Nam poems which I recommended in my last piece. It also contains work by Seamus Heaney, Thom Gunn, and a very good lesser-known American poet—Timothy Steele. It's excellent value for money and most attractively produced. The Editorial concludes with the reminder, "Above all, good poetry needs good readers and loyal ones". Indeed it does.

[15] *Experimenting with an Amen*. By R. S. Thomas. Macmillan, £8.95.
[16] *A Different Drummer*. By Jack Clemo. Tabb House (Padstow, Cornwall), £4.95.
[17] *A Flame in Your Heart*. By Kathleen Jamie and Andrew Greig. Bloodaxe Books, £4.95.
[18] *Numbers 1*. Edited by John Alexander, Alison Rimmer, Peter Robinson and Clive Wilmer. Editorial address: 6 Kingston Street, Cambridge CB1 2NU, £3.95.

Early in March

Across light sky I slide a broken web
With blobs of spawn. Again I wonder why
A pigeon passes with determined strokes
As if it had to find a change of scene.
Our frogs should soon disturb the goldfish pond
Or hop from rocks and heather to the surprise
Of ice, not the expected plop
Through a transparent roof now the duckweed's sparse.
And cats will pat and carry them again
In their astonishingly gentle mouths,
Though some I'll have to save and carry back
If March is wet and they go wandering.
Sometimes cats yawn a "seen it all before",
Blasé as children over the blackbird's song.
I want to see it many times,
Hear croaking as approval of the pond,
A comparable sound to the purr of cats
A man with years to spare might imitate.
Starling's glissando is an easy one
But not his bubble. Give me the time to try,
To recognise more of the sounds of March
And find both decent and indecent words
For collared doves. Great tits I love you too.
You'll never know of your ridiculous name.
Your seesaw is one way to think of love.

Alan Dixon

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Books Encountered

I Could Never Be Lonely Without a Husband. Interviews by DJUNA BARNES. Virago, £5.50.

An eye-opener: punchy journalism from the author of *Nightwood*, originally published in places like *Vanity Fair* and the *New York Sun Magazine*, and including accounts of Diamond Jim Brady and the boxer Jess Willard, but also covering James Joyce, Frank Harris, *et al.*, and enlivened by Barnes's drawings and quirky wit.

Seamus Heaney. By NEIL CORCORAN. Faber, £3.95.

Useful, painstaking, admiring introduction in the Faber Student Guides series which also includes, so far, Beckett, Pound, Eliot, Emily Dickinson, and Edward Thomas. The series editor, John Lucas, is keen on "re-asserting the primacy of the literary text"; but the books include biographies and bibliographies too.

The Political Diary of Hugh Dalton, 1918-40, 1945-60. Edited by BEN PIMLOTT. Jonathan Cape, £40.

Straddling the already published wartime diary, and omitting chunks used in the memoirs, this further supplements Pimlott's masterly biography. Tetchily indiscreet and often funny, it adds grace-notes to the Budget leak and the "brown paper" against European unity, and reveals closeness to Crosland and mistrust of Benn.

John Donne, Undone. By THOMAS DOCHERTY. Methuen, £8.95.

Acute, pugnacious, slightly hubristic and "broadly post-structuralist" study claiming that other critics (including John Carey) unduly ignore the historical background of Donne's verse, and arguing—minutely but to me implausibly—that his apparently confessional poems were dishonest. Fun to contest.

Victor Gollancz: A Biography. By RUTH DUDLEY EDWARDS. Gollancz, £20.

Warm but frank appreciation of that astonishing man—passionate, energetic, naive, childish, compassionate, shrewd, politically wayward, deeply musical, finally reabsorbed by religion. Fascinating on reactions to his *In Darkest Germany*, the book might have said more about the yellow-covered cascade of Gollancz publications.

Margaret Bourke-White: A Biography. By VICKI GOLDBERG. Heinemann, £22.

A photographic expert's and sympathiser's account of the Leftist *Life* photojournalist whose second husband was Erskine Caldwell, of *Tobacco Road* fame. She was courageous, adventurous, and beautiful; her own works now look a bit like publicity stills. She died of Parkinson's disease, aged 67, in 1971.

The Concise Oxford Companion to American Literature. By James D. Hart. Oxford University Press, £19.50.

A handy, 497-page version of the full work, whose fifth and latest edition ran to 896. Professor Hart, in sole charge since it began in 1935, is as laconic as ever, though his brevity conceals barbs. The plot summaries and chronology (1577-1985) are especially valuable: the author items less so, save on the truly great.

Under a Sickle Moon: A Journey Through Afghanistan. By PEREGRINE HODSON. Hutchinson, £12.95.

Absorbingly candid enlarged diary of 1984 travels by a Persian-speaking barrister, reporter, and now banker, corroborating and expanding the impressionistic piece by Jean-François Deniau in the September-October ENCOUNTER. As well as Soviet helicopters, the hazards include dissension, ambush, and diarrhoea.

The Wise Men: Six Friends and the World They Made. By WALTER ISAACSON and EVAN THOMAS. Faber, £15.95.

Enormous (853 pages) and very reasonably priced, a lively portrait of far-sighted giants in action: Dean Acheson, Charles Bohlen, Averell Harriman, George Kennan, Robert Lovett, and John McCloy. Much comes from voluminous reading, but much from interviews and archives, including recordings. The authors are with *Time*: their book transcends it.

Poetry in the Wars. By EDNA LONGLEY. Bloodaxe Books, £12.95, paper £6.95.

Fine nose-to-text studies of poets confronting violence, by a senior lecturer at Queen's University, Belfast. Those discussed include Edward Thomas, Louis MacNeice, Keith Douglas, Philip Larkin, Seamus Heaney, Derek Mahon, and Paul Muldoon: the discussion elucidates the bracing value of strict forms.

A Foot in Each World: Essays and Articles. By LEANITA MCCLAIN. Edited by CLARENCE PAGE. Northwestern University Press, $18.95, paper $8.95.

Sensible, heartfelt journalism by a young black woman caught between white condescension and black reproaches—a meritocrat from the back streets, she'd made the *Chicago Tribune* editorial board. She knew hers was the way ahead, and hailed recent progress; but the strain made her kill herself at 32.

William James: His Life and Thought. By GERALD E. MYERS. Yale University Press, $42, £30.

Monumental addition to the recent surge of work on James. Professor Myers gracefully interweaves life and thought, and writes with (William) Jamesian clarity about difficult philosophical problems, neglecting neither later critical studies nor incidental curiosities (e.g. Gertrude Stein as James's student).

Writers at Work: The Paris Review Interviews, Seventh Series. Edited by GEORGE PLIMPTON. Secker & Warburg, £17.50.

And still they continue. This time, the most interesting subjects are Koestler, Ionesco, Larkin, and Philip Roth; but there are also (*inter alia*) Malcolm Cowley, John Ashbery, Milan Kundera, John Barth, and Edna O'Brien. John Updike's Introduction views the genre with mild irony, welcoming off-the-cuff sidelights on the late great.

The Bonus of Laughter. By ALAN PRYCE-JONES. Hamish Hamilton, £12.95.

Urbane, astonishing, but still discreet memoirs by a legendary *littérateur* straight out of Anthony Powell: Old Etonian, Oxford dropout, assistant to J. C. Squire, officer in military intelligence, editor of the TLS, adviser to the Ford Foundation . . . and delighted expatriate survivor, though with shadows on the smile.

The Position of the Body. By RICHARD STERN. Northwestern University Press, $21.95, paper $9.95.

Dazzling essays and shorter pieces by the author of *Golk*, *Other Men's Daughters*, and (a similar collection) *The Books in Fred Hampton's Apartment*. A faint obsession with Ronald Reagan, and a well-heeled tendency to salvage anything, however brief, are the only flaws I found in a delightful bed book.

Prosperity and Upheaval: The World Economy 1945-1980. By HERMAN VAN DER WEE. Translated by ROBIN HOGG and MAX R. HALL. Viking, £20.

Originally published in German, this is a solid, magisterial textbook by a distinguished Louvain Professor of Social and Economic History. The translation is serviceable: the conclusion unexpectedly inspirational, calling for spiritual development as against Socialist planning or capitalist greed.

R. M.

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POINTS OF THE COMPASS

A Walk in Munich

By Laurence Lerner

HOWEVER WELL you know Munich, there is always something new. Visiting a friend who lives near the *Maximilianeum*, I was taken for a walk along the *Isaranlage*, a long narrow park on the far side of the river, where Thomas Mann used to walk with his dog, and which is meticulously described in his solemn, loving tribute to the dog Bauschan, *Herr & Hund* (translatable either as "A Gentleman and his Dog" or as "A Dog & his Master"—the ambiguity seems to fit Mann).

Munich's river is the Isar, grey-green with melted snow and moraine dirt in spring and early summer, frothing furiously in its now sturdy banks, unable to harm anyone or anything. In summer, my friend explained, you can find nudists in the park, sunbathing, frolicking, even overspilling their banks (as the river no longer does), and travelling by tram to shock the passengers, but never really threatening this well-ordered prosperous city. Our walk led us to the *Georgkirche*, St George's Church, a palimpsest with Romanesque basis and Gothic choir, smothered in late baroque décor. Over the high altar, a statue of St George sits elegantly on his white horse, meticulously poking his lance at a dragon who snaps back at him like a dog. With his long, delicate moustache, his helmet whose plumes wave in the wind, his left hand holding down a quite useless cloak, above all with his intent gaze on the yapping dragon, he looks like a nervous actor at an audition, knowing that he must satisfy the director without seeming to think about it. Johann Baptist Staub, the sculptor (though less well-known than the brothers Asam, or Ignaz Guenther), belongs to the group of 18th-century sculptors and architects who gave Bavaria its own charm and its own kind of baroque.

Bavarian baroque: to appreciate it we must take a diversion from the riverside (we shall return) to look at two of Munich's most famous churches. First, the *Theatinerkirche*, that looms on the skyline from all directions, its mango-coloured towers with their swirling curves one of the sights of Munich. Outside, it shouts at you; inside, all is quiet, spacious and white. Not a blob of colour stains the high, wide nave, a baby angel puts his finger to his lips, and a stern notice tells you that the house of God is not a museum. It is clearly baroque, with its barley-sugar columns, and the allegorical statues of the virtues histrionically displayed around the base of the dome; but one would not have thought baroque could be so spacious and so austere, so empty even. It's "not really Bavarian", I was told; and sure enough the artists were in fact both Italians, first Barelli, then when he was dismissed, Enrico Zuccali.

Rather less than a mile away is the *Asamkirche*, for me the gem of all Munich's churches. It is one of the smallest baroque churches ever, and was conceived as a unity, so that every inch of it seems in movement: there appear to be no straight lines and no simple colours—gold and silver, hidden lighting to suggest depths within depths, twisted columns in a space that seems to writhe and shift. All this in a church that is 9 metres wide and 28 metres long.

We are wrong to associate baroque only with the huge and grandiose, for this is far more truly baroque than the vast calm of the *Theatinerkirche*. In front of you, God the Father seems to be holding his son on to the cross, while a three-dimensional dove sheds the Holy Spirit over them. Look up at the ceiling, and an angel is blowing his trumpet straight at you, so that you can almost feel the spit. It was a private chapel belonging to the architect Egid Quirin Asam (the frescoes are by his brother, Cosmas Damian Asam). Egid Quirin bought up a row of houses in the Sendlingerstrasse, lived in one, and knocked a couple of others down to build the church, and the exterior still projects from its staid terrace as if trying to break free. He died, alas, far from Munich, so his dream of being buried in his masterpiece was never realised.

Am I making Munich out to be mainly a baroque city? Since I find its medieval cathedral rather dull, it is perhaps the baroque that brought it to life—but the later centuries are very much alive too. Let us return to the riverside park, and continue our walk with the long dead Bauschan: starting this time at the *Maximilianeum*, the enormous building put up in the 1860s by King Maximilian II.

It houses (surely this must be unique) both the Bavarian Parliament and living quarters for the 26 students with the best results in the school-leaving examination. . . . As we walk northwards, away from it, we can pause to look at a modern statue of King Ludwig II. Here, it says, where Bavaria's King Ludwig wanted to build a festival hall for Richard Wagner's works, using Gottfried Semper's plans, for the glory of all mankind (the parallel phrasing sounds like verse, good bad verse), the people have placed a memorial.

The people: Ludwig was a withdrawn and solitary King, yet that may not have done him great harm with the people. He indulged his taste for old German mythology by patronising Wagner, and by building palaces all over Bavaria, at enormous expense. He brought the state treasury to the verge of bankruptcy; he withdrew from the world and finally drowned himself, along with his psychiatrist, in circumstances that have remained mysterious. How different from the domestic life of Britain's dear queen, or indeed from the bourgeois respectability of most modern monarchs. Ludwig was emphatically not a monarch for the bourgeois age, yet what a godsend he now is to that most bourgeois of

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institutions, tourism. His picture is everywhere—outside cinemas still showing a 20-year-old romantic film about him, on posters and plates and boxes of chocolates. There are candle-lit concerts in Herrnchiemsee, and thousands of visitors to the absurdly grandiose palace of Neuschwanstein.

By now, such is the paradox of tourism, Ludwig must have brought in far more money than he ever squandered.

CONTINUING THE WALK to where we began, we find ourselves back at the *Georgkirche*, and this time we will look at the graveyard.

The tombstones are a blend of the respectable late 19th century, conventional and ornate, and the plain piece of stone that commemorates Werner Fassbinder, the film director. Local families are there (though the church is no longer a parish church), and a host of literary and musical figures of the past 100 years—Erich Kästner the children's author (*Emil and the Detectives*), Annette Kolb the novelist, Liesl Karlstadt the comedian. And a memorial to Alfred Delp, the local priest who was executed by the Nazis for his involvement in the Von Stauffenberg-von Moltke group responsible for the attempt to assassinate Hitler in 1944. The monument shows the three Israelites in the Fiery Furnace, and in the church you can buy a pamphlet telling of the life and death of Delp. An anti-Nazi hero is an asset to any church today.

And so we find ourselves in Nazi Munich—and there is no denying that there is (or was) plenty of that. Is, or was? What remains today is of course, the architecture, and it may be a question beyond answering to wonder how far architecture can change its associations, how far a building can shed its past. When I lived in Munich I often walked past the *Haus der Kunst*, a long low classical building on the Prinzregentenstrasse, with a façade of fiercely austere Doric pillars. I remarked to one or two friends that I rather liked its brutal, heavy simplicity; and they were astonished. To them it was totally repulsive, because it was "Nazi architecture". It is true that it was built in the 1930s, and that the design was approved by Hitler, and regarded officially as a model for truly Teutonic public buildings. My naive pleasure in classical forms no doubt cannot survive an historical awareness that teaches us the social significance of particular architectural traditions—but is not that significance itself subject to change? Nazism is over, and Munich still has the *Haus der Kunst*—which, with a nice irony, houses Picasso, Henry Moore, Abstract Expressionism, and Pop Art—all the forms of "modern decadence" that the Nazis loathed.

But Munich's associations with Nazism go far deeper than architecture. The famous *Feldherrnhalle*—the 19th-century portico modelled on a Renaissance loggia in Florence—was the scene of Hitler's unsuccessful putsch in 1923, and from 1933 to 1945 it contained a memorial to the 16 Nazi "martyrs", by the same man who designed the *Haus der Kunst*. Nearby is the cellar where Hitler and his cronies used to meet just before they came to power, and about which an elderly refugee in America once told me a chilling story. A bunch of Left-wing journalists used to meet at a nearby table, the two groups studiously ignoring each other. One evening one of them, the worse for drink, stepped behind the already powerful Hitler, leaned over him, fingered his moustache, and said, "So, with this little moustache you want to conquer Germany." Then, in a total hush, he staggered up the steps and into exile.

A couple of hundred yards away stands the opera house, and next to it the state theatre, where, ten years ago, I saw a memorable production of *Arturo Ui*, Brecht's play about the rise of Hitler, which transposes the story into one of Chicago gangsters. It is one of Brecht's more transparent allegories, but powerful in places. In this production the actor who played Arturo Ui did not look particularly like Hitler, and halfway through we realised why. There is a brilliant scene in which Ui takes lessons in public speaking from a broken-down old actor, who in this case first appeared with his back to us, then turned slowly round to reveal the familiar moustache and hairstyle—which, from then on, Ui wore too.

This scene is perhaps the most important in the play, because it explores the interpenetration of theatre and reality, as Brecht does explicitly in some of his comments, claiming not only that Hitler was a brilliant and unscrupulous actor (that is obvious), but that his form of action was to abolish the obvious distinctions, to lead the audience to identify themselves with the very process of dramatising, and so to accept the performance as real life.

In the best Brechtian tradition, this production used "alienation-effects" to emphasise the political immediacy. In particular it used newsreel clips of Hitler's rise, accompanying the various stages of Ui's rise. Some of these showed the 1923 uprising that had taken place not a quarter-of-a-mile from the theatre. Next to me sat an elderly couple, who were wildly enthusiastic, applauding loudly and constantly, as did most of the audience. In a drama so concerned to promote traffic between the fictitious and the actual, how could one fail to notice that a German audience was once again applauding Hitler? Or that my neighbours were old enough to have stood in front of the *Feldherrnhalle*, just a few hundred yards away, in the 1930s, and joined in the other, real, applause? If, that is, we are quite sure of the difference between real applause and theatrical applause. . . .

Well, I thought, sitting uneasily in the dark, there'll be a test at the end, when the actor comes forward to take his bow. During the second half of the play he had stood, every now and then, before cheering actors, or the recorded applause of real German crowds: Arturo Ui, that is—Hitler, that is—had stood there in triumph. Could he now stand in front of this post-Nazi audience and expect the same applause, relying on our knowledge that plays are only plays? In the event, the actor solved the problem very neatly, by ripping off his moustache before he bowed, stepping before us, after all, not as Hitler, but as Klaus-Juergen Wussow.

AND MUNICH TODAY? In the front of everyone's consciousness is the question of radioactivity. Bavaria lay in the path of the Chernobyl fallout, and for a while the government urged against drinking fresh milk and eating lettuce. Then people were told that everything was

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safe again, but only till the autumn. Election posters all over the town announced the party policies. The Socialists offered gradual abolition of all nuclear energy, the Conservatives warned against panic, the Free Democrats (or liberals) offered public discussions with scientists taking part. What you would expect, surely? It doesn't help much to remark that the Left is traditionally in favour of progress: progress, we realise after Chernobyl (if we hadn't realised it before), is a deeply ambiguous idea—as ambiguous as the terms Left and Right. The Right, surely, is for industrial capitalism; and perhaps we are once more seeing the early Victorian situation, where such "progress" is opposed both by radicals and by the nostalgic believers in alternatives. It's an alliance not without precedents.

Talking to friends on the subject, I was struck by how upset, and how mistrustful, they all were. Government reassurances seemed to be met by more than the usual cynicism. And one could see why. Radioactivity is like the pestilence that walks by night, invisible, inaudible, imperceptible, incurable. And it brings a strange reversal of values! Suddenly it was safer to buy long-life milk, vegetables in cans, battery eggs—while health foods, free-range eggs, and fresh milk were dangerous.

Is it mere panic that leads to the demonstrations, sometimes violent, against the proposed fast-breeder reactor in Wackersdorf? By being violent, the "anti-nukes" make their point only too frighteningly well—they remind us that in these days of terrorism an atomic plant is terrifyingly vulnerable. Who should the believer in reason and discussion be more frightened of—a government that seems determined to press ahead with its programme, or demonstrators scrawling "WACKERSDORF—NEVER" all over Munich?

Every cloud has its silver lining. Wherever you go, there are signs of official concern about the environment. In the Marienplatz, the touristic node of Munich, there was an exhibition over the summer, mounted by the city, to give you facts about nuclear energy, to stress the need for clean water and green areas in cities, even urging you not to talk about *Unkraut* (weeds), but rather to call them *Wildkraut* (wild plants). The cynic will say it's a sop from a government and a city that don't intend to do much. But democracy thrives, does it not, on sops.

LEAVING THE MARIENPLATZ, I strolled along Munich's wonderful pedestrian precinct, and its consumer paradise. You can buy a suit of armour or an ice-cream, an oil-painting or a pound of fruit. Those delicious cherries from Italy—they must be free of radioactivity, surely. Such huge juicy cherries never grew on any tree till man came along to breed them, protect them from pests, deliver them to the heart of a great city hundreds of miles away. On one side are posters from the Greens, urging us to keep the environment natural; on the other is the official exhibition denouncing weed-killers, urging us to "let everything grow". Everyone is for green.

I bite one of my delicious red cherries, and reflect ruefully that it is as man-made as the *Asamkirche*.

His Madwoman

God knows he's not the only one who knows
His woman's crazy, vicious as a bitch.
She has a wisdom she cannot expose.

Posturing madly, to her man she shows
Frustration's brought her to this desperate pitch.
God knows he's not the only one who knows.

Woman's awareness from the rank earth grows:
Blood-red it flowers from its rotting ditch.
She has a wisdom she dare not expose.

Goddess of chaos, from which order rose,
Called God omniscient—ah, cunning witch:
God knows He's not the only one who knows.

Snubbed by her patriarch, she tight-lipped chose
The angry victim's comfortable niche.
She has a wisdom she will not expose.

Must he then hopeless wait till from her flows
That deep live knowledge which could make them rich?
God knows he's not the only one who knows
She has a wisdom she may not expose.

Alix Frank

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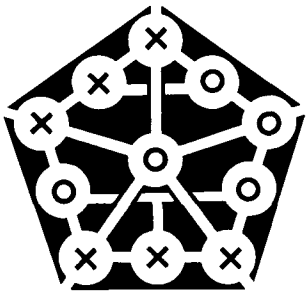
PUBLIC OPINION

Do the Germans have a "National Character"?

Changing Notions—By ELISABETH NOELLE-NEUMANN



ARE THERE two faces to the Federal Republic of Germany? Can we speak of a "day" side of the Germans and a "night" side? We can certainly make a distinction between the public and private aspects of life in any country, but that is not what I mean in this instance. There is a German reality which is visible and, in fact, striking; for it has a great deal to do with the material success of the West Germans after World War II and with the basic mood which became prevalent after 1945 and continues right up to the present—wanting to do everything differently from before, to break with all German traditions: no more militarism, no nationalism, no idealism, no more putting duty and order (*Pflicht und Ordnung*) ahead of everything else, no more working so hard. At a very early stage, in September 1945 in Tubingen, Carlo Schmid (a well-known Social Democrat and for many years Vice-President of the German *Bundestag*) summed up the new *Zeitgeist* in a brief phrase when he said to me: "*Man muss die deutsche Jugend zu Ungehorsam erziehen* (German youth needs to be educated to disobedience)."

We would hardly be aware of the second German reality if the methods of opinion-polling, of *sondage* or *Demoskopie* (as it is called in Germany), did not exist. The Germans have been interviewed without interruption ever since the founding of the Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach in 1947. By the end of the 1950s there were some 30 German opinion research institutes busy with related social research—*Die befragte Nation* (*The Interviewed Nation*) is the title of a book published in the late 1950s by Gerhard Schmidtchen, who was at that time a researcher with the Allensbach Institute.

Survey results have suggested that a nation can hardly change its character without running into serious problems. In response to the question: "*What do you consider to be the best qualities of the Germans?*", the response "*I don't know of any best qualities of the Germans*" increased from 4% in 1952 to 22% in the mid-1970s. Since then, that sad response has shown only a very gradual decrease—to 18%.

Foreign visitors see the thriving German economy and ask whether the Germans aren't proud of their economic recovery. Surprisingly, the Germans are *not* inclined to be proud of it—and this has to do with the second German reality—which is hidden from view. This first became evident in the early 1970s in a survey of what at that time were the six member states of the European Community. In response to the question: "*Are you proud of your nationality, proud to be French, Italian, Dutch, Belgian, Luxemburgian, or German?*" the Germans decidedly brought up the rear in national pride, *Nationalstolz*, both among the total population and in the younger generation. An international survey—conducted in eleven European countries, in the USA, and in Japan in 1981-82—again showed the Germans lagging behind all the other major countries in national pride. And if we compare the responses to German surveys conducted between 1971 and 1985, there is up to the present no evidence of an increase in national pride.

Why do we Germans, or indeed any of us, need national pride? It could be that these responses are of no real significance. I would like to come back to this question, but first we should take a closer look at the striking and successful new German realities which are especially visible to foreign observers.

LET ME BEGIN WITH the German standard of living, taking three eras to illustrate the sharp rise: the 1950s, the '70s, and the present—the mid-1980s. In the '50s, 26% had a bathroom in their apartment; today it is 90%. A telephone: 12% in the mid-'50s, 53% in the mid-'70s, and 89% today. A dishwasher: 1% in the '60s (when the question was first asked), 15% in the mid-'70s, and 36% today. One or more automobiles: 77% in 1985; and now one out of every four households owns several cars—in 1975 it was only 9%. Almost all households have television (98%), and of these almost 80% have colour television. New developments, such as video, spread very rapidly. In 1980, 3% of households had a video recorder; by 1981 it was 6%, in 1983 11%, and in 1985 20%. This willingness to accept a technical innovation so quickly attests to the rise in purchasing power.

"FOR THE BEST WEEKS OF THE YEAR" read the holiday posters which a large German tourism company uses to advertise vacation trips, and the slogan is in common use. "Yes, that's the way it is", say many Germans. "Rather than 'living to work', as we used to, we are finally 'working to

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live'." However, "living" no longer means, as it did to their parents or grandparents, being able to pay only for the necessities of life, for housing, heating, clothing, and food. "*That's the way it was for my parents—that's what* **they** *worked for*", 28% of Germans stated in 1982. But "*That's the way it is for* ***me***; I work for the necessities of life", was stated by only 11% of German job-holders.

In the early 1950s the situation was very different. In 1953 an Allensbach interview question read: "*Could you tell me whether you would eat more meat, butter, eggs and sausage if prices weren't so high?*" At the time only 24% said: "*No, I wouldn't eat more of any of those items.*" In 1985, 66% said this, and even the others (27%) said they would at best eat more meat. In 1953, 62% replied "*more butter*", compared to only 13% today. Now 13% say "*more sausage*", and 2% "*more eggs*". Two-thirds of the Germans watch their weight.

FOREIGN OBSERVERS are sometimes surprised at the ritual significance that holiday trips (*die Urlaubsreise*) have for the Germans, with these "best weeks of the year" truly representing the focal point of life. In 1984, two-thirds of the population took a holiday away from home (short vacations of less than a week were not included; another 56% stated that they had taken such short vacations); 66% of these trips were taken abroad, and the expenses amounted to approximately 40 billion Deutschmarks. The main impressions other nations have of our nation are probably based on the German abroad during his "best weeks of the year".

AFTER WORLD WAR II the Germans wanted to do everything differently, emphasising and enjoying "the best things in life". Foreign observers are struck by the care that the Germans now devote to dressing; German male and even female fashion, as well as German furniture, has acquired an international reputation. "*Are good food and drink important to you, or are they secondary to other things?*" was a question put to the Germans (in 1978 and again in 1985). Two-thirds responded: "*Important to me*", and more than 40% characterised themselves as "*gourmets* (*Feinschmecker*)". In response to the question as to the main meaning of their lives, 54% said: "*Being happy, getting lots of pleasure out of things.*" In 1978, only 37% said that "*enjoying life*" constituted the meaning of life, and in 1985, 45%.

A question which was asked regularly between 1956 and 1985 shows how much the traditional attitude of the Germans has changed. The question read:

> "*Two people are talking about life. One says 'I want to enjoy life and not work any harder than I have to. After all, we only live once and the important thing is to get something out of life.'*
>
> *The other says: 'I see my life as a mission that I am here for and in which I invest all my energy. I want to accomplish something in life even if it is often difficult.'*
>
> *What is your opinion: Which of these two has the right idea?*"

In 1956, 59% of the Germans said that they viewed their life as a mission, while 28% wanted most of all to enjoy life, to get something out of it. The picture changed in a slow but continuous process. Instead of 59%, today only 43% say they consider their life a mission, while "*enjoying life*" rose from 28% to 37%, and the "undecided" response—"*I don't know how I should respond*"—increased from 13% to 20%.

The same change is observable with regard to attitudes to work. A test question read: "*Which hours of the day do you generally like most—the hours at work or the hours during which you don't work, or do you like both?*" The response "*like hours when I don't work the most*" rose from 33% in 1962 to 48% in 1985.

WHAT IS "*in*", what is "*out*"? The ease with which this question is accepted by respondents in survey interviews is quite remarkable. The notion appears to have originated in a snappy parlour game invented in America, which then entered the language and was eventually incorporated in an Allensbach test question.

> "*Many young people today say something is* '**in**' *when they think something is modern and in step with the times. Conversely they say something is* '**out**' *if they think it is old-fashioned, not in step with the times. Some things relating to this have been set down here.* [The interviewer presents a pack of 42 cards, each of which contains one term.]
>
> *Could you please tell me when you think something is* '**in**' *or when you think it is* '**out**'?"

The procedure has, I confess, a slightly barbaric aspect. Ideas, plans, the holy and the trivial, virtues and foolishness are thrown into one grab-bag, and then sorted according to whether or not they are in vogue. This is only possible because the process is part of everyday human behaviour rather than being an invention. In a sense everything we hear, see and do, we constantly, unwittingly, sort into "*ins*" and "*outs*". This is how the *Zeitgeist* is created, and how we become aware of changing aspects in the climate of opinion.

A snapshot of the *Zeitgeist* of 1985 for the Federal Republic of Germany appears on p. 70 (our representative sample consisted of 2,257 interviews). The last nine items are obviously 19th-century. Admittedly, a good deal depends upon slight variations of meaning in the specific word. "Heroes" are out? Is Boris Becker a hero? What would the result be if the word was "star" rather than "hero"? Language, too, is part of the *Zeitgeist*.

The high rank held by "*lingerie, nice underwear*" might surprise those who still entertain a traditional view of the Germans, but then so might jeans, science fiction, body-building for women and for men, and comics. Does it all come down to the Germans being "Americanised"? "Hiking" is in the middle of the list of contemporariness. "Hiking" (39% "*hike frequently*") is at the top of 36 leisure-time activities, after "swimming" (47% "*swim frequently*") and "listen to records or cassettes" (45% "*frequently*"). And we owe this entirely to the Federal President Karl Carstens, who during his five years in office (1979-84) hiked over

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1,600 kilometres, through all kinds of German landscapes—usually accompanied by his wife, a doctor, and by hordes of Presidential followers. At the end of his period in office, four million more Germans than previously said that "*hiking and mountain climbing*" were their preferred leisure-time activities.

HAVE THE GERMANS, then, been "Americanised"? The question has not yet been satisfactorily answered, will never be easy to answer, for there is always "on the one hand" and "on the other". On the one hand, the Germans feel a particular affinity to the Americans. One out of three Germans says: "*Ancestors of mine, family members of mine, emigrated to America. . . .*" On the American side, a statistical survey recently confirmed this image of a particular affinity. In response to a question about one's ancestors' nationality, 25% of the Americans stated that they were of German origin (thus putting immigration from Germany at the very top of the list of ethnic or national origins). Beyond politics—but certainly due in part to help from CARE packages and positive experiences with American GIs in the Occupation forces after the War—there is in Germany a feeling of sympathy for the USA which makes it easier for Germans to accept American symbols, from pop-music idols such as Elvis Presley to McDonald's fast-food restaurants.

And there are certain similarities that are not very visible. Thus a mood test—really happy moods or especially depressed moods, which were asked about in representative surveys in the US and Europe—showed that there is no European nation which tends so much to mood swings (*Stimmungsschwankungen*) as the Americans—with the exception of the Germans. A tendency to go from one extreme to the other has been attributed to the Germans for a long time, and this still seems to apply today.

On the other hand, however, the Germans are obviously different from the Americans in important respects. American "mobility" is striking: whether it's a matter of disposing of your furniture at a yard sale and then moving house, or buying new things and then moving again. The Germans have become increasingly sedentary. Even when they are unemployed, the great majority does not accept the idea of moving to obtain a new job. This may in part be related to the great increase in "sociability" in Germany in the last 30 years. Friendly relationships in one's neighbourhood have almost doubled (according to an Allensbach survey of 1953, which was repeated in exactly the same form in 1979), and this may well be one result of affluence and a leisure society.

AGAIN, THERE IS A GREAT DIFFERENCE between work norms in the USA and in Germany. In America it is now established that people may work beyond the age of 65, while in Germany there has been an increase in early retirement. The holiday-loving Germans currently have a claim to the longest vacations—30 days per year—while Americans have the shortest: 12 days per year. The German desire for "security" is formidable. They now have the highest "incidental wage costs" in absolute terms (at DM 12.69 per working hour in 1984): that is, in contributions to all kinds of social insurance. Some 81% of actual wages must be added on as "incidental wage costs". In the US, it is 39%, and in England 41%.

And Americans display what they own—big new cars are the favourite symbol. The Germans—very much in contrast to what you read everywhere—tend to conceal what they own, as was shown by an Allensbach question, asked in winter 1982-83, with a choice between two responses in a dialogue:

"*Two men are talking here. Would you please read this and tell me which of the two you would tend to agree with?*

	"In" %	"Out" %		"In" %	"Out" %
Environmental protection	93	2	*Cooking*	52	22
Back to Nature	80	7	*Setting up your own business*	48	20
Weight control	75	9	*Comics*	49	22
Computer graphics	66	8	*Currywurst*	50	23
Knitting	71	15	*Black*	47	22
Jeans	72	17	*Jewellery for men*	50	25
Going out to eat	67	12	*Hiking*	52	31
Houseplants	64	13	*Black music*	37	23
Science fiction	62	16	*Going to the psychiatrist*	39	25
Italian restaurants	61	17	*The island of Bali*	31	21
Taking the pill	63	20	*Neon colours for clothes and furniture*	36	30
Voting for the Greens	60	17	*The ragged look (Lumpenlook)*	38	40
Drinking tea	57	19	*God*	34	36
Rock 'n roll	60	25	*Parlour games*	37	40
Lingerie, nice underwear	52	18	*Theatre, Opera*	33	42
Magnum (champagne, etc)	48	14	*Marriage*	37	48
Bodybuilding (for women)	53	21	*Teddy-bear coats*	26	43
White	49	18	*Household help*	25	43
Package tours	53	23	*Writing poetry*	20	49
Bodybuilding (for men)	53	23	*Heroes*	14	57
Imagination (Phantasie)	50	20	*Pallor (paleness)*	10	56

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> *'I like it when someone enjoys showing what he owns. Pride of ownership is a positive quality.'"*

This first response was chosen by 13%.

> *"'I tend to think you shouldn't show off like that. I think pride in ownership tends to be showing off.'"*

This second response was chosen by 73%.

The Germans fear envy. The famous old saying, "*Mehr sein als scheinen* (Being is more important than appearances)" secretly continues to be a guiding principle.

"HAVE THE GERMANS BECOME LAZY?" was a banner headline a year ago when the results of international surveys on work norms were published.

It would, in my view, be a great mistake to affirm that this is true. Texts from as early as the 12th century describe the Germans as especially diligent. When in the mid-1950s the Allensbach Institute coordinated for *Reader's Digest* an international survey in seven countries, "*The Germans are hard-working*" headed the list of characteristics of the Germans in every country. Can a national characteristic such as this disappear in just a few decades? I think not.

Everything speaks for the Germans continuing to be a nation of perfectionists. Not liking to see sloppiness in work, and instead taking perfectionism to extremes (with respect also to cleanliness and order)—these are established German national characteristics, despite the dirt and disorder which shocked foreign visitors at German universities in the 1970s.

I said at the outset that there are "two faces" to Germany. Let me consider the second. Why are there these German contradictions? Hard work and conscientiousness—but at the same time an official German attitude toward work represented by a devil-may-care "*I find my work interesting but I don't let it interfere with the rest of my life.*" Only 25% of German job-holders agreed that the majority opinion of the Americans, Japanese, Israelis, Swedes, and English—"*I have a need to do the best I can regardless of pay*"—represented their own attitude. In response to the question about what most Germans think about their work, only 6% said: "*Most Germans want to do their best. . . .*"

Such contradictions indicate the Germans' great insecurity, resulting from the political and economic history of Germany in this century. Two World Wars were lost; there was almost total inflation on two different occasions; and unemployment—in the early 1930s just under one out of three persons was out of work—was the tragic seedbed for a dictatorship, a brutal system lasting for over twelve years. At the end of the War, 80% of men born before 1933 who are still alive today had been drafted or were prisoners-of-war. A great proportion of the cities had been reduced to rubble by bombing attacks. One-third of the country was lost and the rest was divided into two nations by the deadly East-West border and the Berlin Wall. And now, in the language of the American Generals in the Pentagon, the old *Reich* is merely "the central region" where an armed East and West confront each other.

Everything had been wrong and was now to be done differently. This German attempt to change value systems resulted in extreme changes along the whole line—in religious and moral notions, in political values and in sexual norms.

"*Where do you agree with your parents?*" was a question asked in 1981-82 in an international survey conducted in eleven European countries, in the USA, and in Japan. The gap between the parents' values and the children's was largest in the Federal Republic of Germany. This surely means that there will be conflict in the family, as well as distrust and a decline in the desire to have children. From the mid-1960s on, the birth-rate has declined in Western industrial countries, with Germany—in another extreme development—eventually having the lowest birth-rate in the world.

This has been accompanied by the spread of deeply pessimistic moods. In response to the question, "*Do you believe in progress—that is, that mankind faces an ever better future, or don't you believe this?*", the response "*Believe in progress*" decreased from 60% in 1972 to 28% in 1982. In response to the question: "*If you think of the future—do you believe that life is getting easier and easier, or is it getting harder and harder?*", 32% said in the late 1960s: "*Life is getting easier and easier.*" But only 14% said as much in 1983. On the other hand, over the same period the response "*Life is getting harder and harder*" showed an increase from 43% to 58%. In answer to the question: "*On balance, would you say that these are happy times, or is it your feeling that these are pretty difficult times?*", there was a decrease in the response "*happy times*"—from 44% in 1970 to 26% in 1985.

WHAT OF THE Nazi past? I am convinced that it is not true that the Germans tried to repress the dark past of the Nazi period, although this is often suspected or claimed. As early as the 1950s, and from then onwards, Allensbach readership analyses showed that reports on the Nazi period particularly attracted many readers. It is only very recently, however, that the Germans who experienced the Nazi period have rediscovered this period in German media presentations (for example, in the television series *Heimat*). The contradiction between the image consistently conveyed by the media and people's own experience contributed to a loss of perspective. This also created an additional barrier between older and younger people, and helped to cause a lack of communication.

And yet there is continuity. The constitutional preamble to the German Basic Law states:

> "The entire German people are called upon to achieve the Unity and Freedom of Germany in free self-determination."

An Allensbach question on this reads: "*Should this continue to be included in the Basic Law? Or do you think it should be eliminated?*" In 1985, 72% said "*Should remain*", with 80% of those 60 and over, and 61% of Germans under the age of 30 responding in this way.

Despite everything, I cannot help but conclude that there is a certain continuity in national character. It has been said of

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the Germans that they are "a people of poets and thinkers (*Das Volk der Dichter und Denker*)". We now find "writing poetry" at the end of the trendy list of what is *In* and what is *Out*; it is viewed as the utmost in old-fashionedness. But in 1984 we asked:

> "*We would like to know what all the things are you can be proud of as a German. Some things are listed on these cards. Could you please take a look at them and set aside all of those you believe one can be proud of as a German?*"

"*Goethe, Schiller and other great writers*" topped the list (71%), followed by "*the beautiful landscapes*" (71%) and then by "*Beethoven, Bach, and other classical German composers*" (63%). "*German scholars and scientists*" and "*top-level technical achievements*" came in fourth place, with 59% each.

A "PORTRAIT OF A NATION" presupposes that there are individuals of all kinds and with different types of character in the population, but that at the same time there *is*, after all, such a thing as a "national character". And this is also confirmed by survey research today.

According to the generalised image of their "national character", Germans are introverted and inner-directed; introspection is part of their nature. On the other hand, they tend to regard politics as a foreign quantity, even though interest in politics has increased—mainly under the influence of television (in 1952, 27% said "*I am interested in politics*"; in 1983, 51%). In his famous book *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*[1] Thomas Mann wrote that the finest German quality was "*die Musikalität ihrer Seele*" (musicality of the soul). Whatever that may mean, it is a fact that Germans who travel abroad can hear the music of their classical composers played all over the world. The desire to "get to the bottom of things" is also part of the German national character, and it has led to restlessness and innovation (as the examples of Paracelsus, Luther, and Kant show), and to scholarly achievements.

There *is* German continuity; one thinks of the *Wandervogel*, and their love of nature and of forests. "Back to nature" now appears in the top group of the *Zeitgeist*. "Back to nature" is "*In*". The "hysteria" about preserving the German woods, doing something about the dying forests, is something which perplexes many foreigners. But the forests are the dark, hidden, and inward quality of nature, revered by the Germans for a thousand years in song and saga.

WHY DO WE NEED national pride? Survey research suggests that those who are "proud" of their country are more optimistic, more satisfied with life, have more pride in their work. From this social-psychological point of view one can hardly argue about whether pride in one's country is good or evil.

A feeling of national identity goes along with that form of pride. If the Germans can be said to be in search of their identity, then clearly they are still in the middle of the process. Was the change of government in October 1982, from the Social Democratic/Liberal government of Helmut Schmidt to the Conservative/Liberal government of Helmut Kohl, a turning-point? If we take as an indicator the "new optimism" that has become prevalent since 1983, it was indeed. A new stability is now discernible. At the turn of the year 1981-82, 32% said that they looked to the future with hope, and 34% said they looked forward with fear. At the turn of the year 1983-84, 45% were hopeful, and in 1984-85 it was 55%.

Are the Germans in the process of rediscovering themselves? And what is it that they would like to find at the end of the quest? That their national character has remained the same? that it has become something different? As the ancient philosopher said, "All is continuity and change".

[1] See the new English translation, *Reflections of a Non-political Man*. By THOMAS MANN. Translated by W. D. MORRIS. Frederick Ungar, £19.95.

Shadow Dance at Dorrigo Plains

for Mark Giles

Rosewood, a tree which I have never seen
except embalmed in chairs, rises each night
in a forest of thick cries writhing
under bulldozer blades at Dorrigo.

A hundred years ago the trees had no need
to remember themselves back to life.
They were there in leaf, dense flesh, light
which the polished plains cannot forget.

Through the valley below the bare ridges
of Dorrigo I walk with Mark who rants,
The nearest thing to teak in Australia
and they heaped it up, watched it burn.

Like the rustle of leaves lost years ago
to grass his words too sink and stain,
his voice trails off into chancy silence
of the rainforest shattered by birds.

Rosewood, a tree that I have never heard,
even now competes with dogs, cows, a pump,
the occasional detonation
of a good idea in a farmer's head,

even now that forest of dead voices sings
in Dorrigo, shoves its silence sideways
like a forgotten tune into our heads
where a life remembered is not quite dead.

Tony Lintermans

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CONTROVERSY

A Reply to Patrick Middleton

Victorian Values Revisited

By Jeffrey Richards

LOATH AS I AM to defend Mrs Thatcher, professional courtesy requires that I should come to her aid in the matter of "Victorian Values". In his ingenious article ("For 'Victorian', Read 'Georgian'", ENCOUNTER, July-August 1986) Patrick Middleton argues that the values Mrs Thatcher claimed as Victorian—hard work, thrift, cleanliness, self-respect, and patriotism—were in fact Georgian, largely, it seems, on the grounds that they were more respected in the inter-War years than in the 19th century. But his argument is based on two false premises. He presupposes that because a set of values is not universally adhered to, it is somehow something less than a set of values. In fact every age has a dominant ideology, and that ideology is almost never universally accepted. Secondly, he posits an entirely artificial antithesis between the Victorian age and the Georgian age, exaggerating the extent to which Mrs Thatcher's values were rejected in the former and accepted in the latter.

There is, in truth, no such thing as a distinctive set of Georgian values. They are identical with the Victorian values outlined by Mrs Thatcher.

> "Except for 'God' the most popular word in the Victorian vocabulary must have been 'work'. . . . The glorification of work as a supreme virtue, with the accompanying scorn of idleness, was the common theme of the prophets of earnestness."

So wrote Walter E. Houghton in his great analysis of Victorian values, *The Victorian Frame of Mind* (Yale University Press, 1957). It was a central tenet in the world-views of such key figures as Carlyle, Ruskin, Tennyson, and Kingsley; and it was widely popularised in that archetypically Victorian work, Samuel Smiles's *Self-Help*. Work was seen not only as the key to earthly success but also as the means of spiritual fulfilment. The work practices of the factory system also did much to instil regularity, discipline, and orderliness in the work-force, to the extent that the 1850s, for instance, were seen as a period of order, improvement, and progress after the alarums and excursions of the 1848 European revolutions and the Chartist movement in Britain. In W. L. Burn's felicitous phrase, the middle of the century was a veritable "age of equipoise".

"Living within one's income" (as Mrs Thatcher put it) or thrift (as the Victorians would have called it) was another cardinal precept. One of the most famous pieces of advice in all Victorian literature is that given by Mr Micawber to David Copperfield: "Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure, nineteen nineteen six, result happiness. Annual income, twenty pounds, annual expenditure twenty pounds ought and six, result misery. . . ." As so often, Dickens was distilling the conventional wisdom of his age. Samuel Smiles devoted an entire volume to *Thrift* (1875):

> "It is the savings of individuals which compose the wealth—in other words the well-being—of every nation. On the other hand, it is the wastefulness of individuals which occasions the impoverishment of states. So that every thrifty person may be regarded as a public benefactor, and every thriftless person as a public enemy."

The Friendly Societies, with their commitment to regular savings, were one of the key institutions of Victorian life.

"Cleanliness is next to Godliness" was an aphorism of John Wesley, a seminal influence on so much of Victorian life and thought. It became so much identified with England in the 19th century that Treitschke told his pupils: "The English think soap is civilisation." Brian Harrison has written of the 19th century:

> "The struggle to keep clean—continuously fought out in school, meeting-hall and church as well as in the home—was a battle so continuous and instinctive that it leaves few traces in the literature."[1]

Robert Roberts in his vivid and evocative account of the classic slum, recalling the dirt and stench of Edwardian Salford, added:

> "That people stayed scrupulously clean in such surroundings—and many did—only proves the tenacity of the human spirit."[2]

SELF-RESPECT in its wider aspect, respectability, was so central a strand in Victorian life as to take on an ideological force all its own. Brian Harrison has clearly shown how respectability played a crucial role in the formation of Chartism, Liberalism, Socialism, and Conservatism. In his account of working-class life 1890-1914, Standish Meacham observes that

> "respectability became a family enterprise; its achievement depended upon cooperation from the entire mem-

[1] Brian Harrison, *The Peaceable Kingdom* (1982), p. 171.
[2] Robert Roberts, *The Classic Slum* (1977), p. 49.

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bership and an understanding that collective reputation took precedence over personal preference."[3]

In defining respectability, he refers to the "concrete and ready to hand distinction the working class had long ago made between 'rough' and 'respectable'."

One of the major weaknesses of Patrick Middleton's argument is his failure to take a proper account of this fundamental, indeed yawning, chasm within the Victorian working class, that between the "respectables" and the "roughs". There has always been a "rough" working class, devoted to drink, violence, and immediate gratification. It existed in the Georgian inter-War period. It still exists. Equally there has always been a "respectable" working class. Many of its members voted for Mrs Thatcher in 1979, and again in 1983.

Lastly, there is patriotism. Love of country was deeply ingrained in the 19th-century population, transcending class and party. It is attested to in almost every field of popular culture, from drawing-room ballads to music-hall songs, from stage melodrama to penny dreadfuls. Heroic sailors called Tom Trueheart and Jack Steadfast, often draped in the Union Jack, battled for Queen and Country against villainous foreign hordes on stage and page. Almost everyone could sing *Soldiers of the Queen* and *Sons of the Sea*, while reciters thrilled to the martial glories of "The Charge of the Light Brigade" and "A Private of the Buffs".

THIS COMPREHENSIVE SET of Victorian values was then handed on intact to the inter-War Georgian age. Patrick Middleton attempts to claim it for his Georgian era by reading back from the 1930s to the 19th century. But it makes no sense to divide off the two periods so arbitrarily when there is strong evidence of continuity. The crime rate, enviably low in the inter-War period, had been falling since the 1870s, and in the case of juvenile crime, since the 1850s. Similarly, drunkenness as a major national problem had begun to decline in the 1870s.

Overall, the picture looks very different if, instead of reading back from the 1930s, we read forward from the 1830s, comparing the Victorian age with the pre-Victorian age. Before Victoria, savage pleasures like bull-baiting, bear-baiting, cock-fighting, dog-fighting, and public executions diverted the masses. All these activities were outlawed by the Victorians as part of a conscious mission to civilise and improve. Geoffrey Gorer (whom Patrick Middleton quotes with approval) notes that the 19th century witnessed a crucial transformation in British character:

> "During the course of the 19th century, this lawless violence, this pleasure in fighting and in witnessing the pain and humiliation of others and the gratuitous suffering of animals almost completely disappeared . . . readiness to fight and approval of aggressive behaviour would seem to have lingered longer in the working classes . . . but so far as public life is concerned, there does seem to have been this remarkable change from Roaring Boys to Boys' Brigade, from John Bull to John Citizen."[4]

G. M. Young analysed it best when he pointed to the transformation of the mind and heart of the nation in the late 18th and early 19th century by Evangelicalism:

> "By the beginning of the 19th century, virtue was advancing on a broad invincible front. . . . The Evangelicals gave to the island a creed which was at once the basis of its morality and the justification of its wealth and power, and with the creed, that sense of being an Elect People, which, set to a more blatant tune, became a principal element in late Victorian imperialism. By about 1830, their work was done. They had driven the grosser kinds of cruelty, extravagance and profligacy underground. They had established a certain level of behaviour for all who wished to stand well with their fellows. In moralising society they had made social disapproval a force which the boldest sinner might fear. By the beginning of the Victorian age the faith was already hardening into a code. . . . The Evangelical discipline, secularised as respectability, was the strongest binding force in a nation which without it might have broken up."[5]

People in the 1930s would certainly not have recognised Patrick Middleton's description of Victorian values as "Georgian". They knew exactly where their values came from, and they looked back with increasing regret to the 19th century as the 20th century wore on. Stanley Baldwin and King George V were revered precisely because they embodied Victorian values. In his authoritative study of inter-War Britain, C. L. Mowat notes that there was in the 1930s "a stirring of patriotic feeling and a nostalgic respect for the Victorians whose solid virtues had raised the British Empire to a power and majesty sadly lacking in the age of the dictators."[6] The film producer Herbert Wilcox shrewdly capitalised on this feeling with his enormously popular cinematic celebrations of the Victorian age, *Victoria the Great* (1937) and *Sixty Glorious Years* (1938).

MR MIDDLETON IS QUITE RIGHT to draw attention to the revisionist work of historians like John Stevenson and Chris Cook, who have put into perspective the folk image of the 1930s as a deeply divided society, a "devil's decade" of hunger marches, dole queues, class struggle, and the means test. The Midlands and the South, revitalised by the rise of motor manufacture and the arrival of new light industry, were flourishing. The middle classes were enjoying greater affluence than ever, and overall the standard of living was rising.

But Mr Middleton is in danger of doing what he accuses others of doing. Just as the image of the 1930s as a period of unrelieved gloom and doom is false, so too is a picture of the period as one of unmitigated sweetness and light. The Depression had devastated the area of Britain's traditional heavy industries: the North, South Wales, Scotland. There

[3] Standish Meacham, *A Life Apart: The English Working Class 1890-1914* (1977), p. 27.
[4] Geoffrey Gorer, *Exploring English Character* (1955), pp. 15-17.
[5] G. M. Young, *Victorian England: Portrait of an Age* (1936, Oxford University Press edn., 1977), pp. 4-5.
[6] C. L. Mowat, *Britain Between the Wars 1918-1949* (1976), p. 522.

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were three million unemployed, whose plight is graphically evoked in Nigel Gray's oral history of the Great Depression and for whom the 1930s meant "malnutrition, shabbiness, dirt, industrial strife, the indignities of the Means Test and the threat of the workhouse."[7] One might also note that the workers who suffered most in this depression were those who had been the most skilled and most prosperous in the staple pre-World War I industries (coal, ship-building, textiles) which had helped make Victorian Britain great. In seeking to exalt the inter-War years at the expense of the 19th century, Mr Middleton recalls Seebohm Rowntree's discovery in 1899 that a third of the working class in Britain were living below the poverty line. This was based on an in-depth study of the city of York. But Mr Middleton fails to mention that, using a more sophisticated definition of poverty, Rowntree discovered that 31% of the working class in York were living in poverty in 1936.[8] Just as in the 19th century, the "roughs" or *lumpenproletariat* continued to flourish. Jerry White's exemplary study of Campbell Bunk, Islington, shows that the area partly acquired and certainly maintained its reputation as "the worst street in North London" after the Victorian era.[9] Indeed, in every big city there were areas where no policeman dared to walk alone.

PATRICK MIDDLETON TAKES ISSUE with me over my interpretation of the control of the mass media in the 1930s. But once again his picture is dangerously one-dimensional. Most historians would place the beginning of the mass media in the 1890s and not at the arbitrary date of 1918. Cinema-going was already well-established by the outbreak of World War I. The mass-circulation popular press dates from even earlier.

Middleton accuses me of *marxisant* views and simplistic social-control thinking in my account of inter-War censorship. While agreeing with him that many did "accept without question that the middle classes had a duty to protect their social subordinates", I stand by my view that through censorship "a largely working-class audience was being programmed to accept the concepts of propriety and decorum which were paramount in suburbia." It is based on the whole weight of evidence, cited in my *Age of the Dream Palace* (1984) and elsewhere, about the state of mind which led to the introduction and maintenance of censorship.

The attitude of the authorities was pre-eminently one of fear. For, just as the establishment of the 19th century was haunted by the spectre of the French Revolution, so their inter-War counterparts looked back with considerable apprehension to the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. The disturbances on "Red Clydeside", the mutiny of the fleet at Invergordon, and the General Strike did nothing to still those fears. The 1924 general election was held amid a "Red scare" precipitated by the Zinoviev letter. Many of the popular thrillers of the period, an eloquent mirror of middle-class paranoia, were preoccupied with conspiracy, revolution, and the undermining of "the thin crust of civilisation". In retrospect, we can see many of these fears to have been misplaced. But they were very real fears nevertheless; and the cinema, in particular, was seen as a potential instrument for inflaming the masses. That is why the great Russian classics like *Battleship Potemkin* were banned. That is why films critical of Monarchy, Government, and Police were banned. That is why existing moral and social values were rigorously enforced. And that is why the Presidents of the British Board of Film Censors were always experts in propaganda and the manipulation of public opinion.[10]

Mr Middleton is quite right to detect irony in my treatment of the follies, foibles, and excesses of a censorship system insensitive to the nature and needs of the new medium and leading too often to the production of bland and mediocre film fare rather than artistically or even socially worthwhile movies. But he is quite wrong in supposing that irony to extend to the virtues of duty, service, concern, and hard work. Had he read further in my *Age of the Dream Palace* he would have detected my undisguised admiration for Gracie Fields as the apostle of consensus, and for Leslie Howard and Robert Donat as exemplars of all that was best and noblest in the chivalric tradition. But then I have become used to selective perception on the part of critics. My first book, *Visions of Yesterday* (1973), a study of the cinema of Empire, was described by one reviewer as "a work of nostalgia masquerading as history" and by another as "witheringly scornful" of Imperial values. The fact of the matter is that no historian worth his salt gives a blanket endorsement to any age, but seeks to weigh up the credits and debits.

WHERE PATRICK MIDDLETON and I can perhaps agree, if we can dispose of the false concept of "Georgian values", is in recognising the persistence and extension of Victorian values into the inter-War years. But it is necessary, I think, to see this as part of a continuous and coherent process of development stretching from the 1830s to the 1950s. It was not even decisively disrupted by two World Wars, for (as Anthony Howard pertinently observed) the Labour election victory of 1945 "brought about the greatest restoration of traditional social values since 1660."[11] The crucial disjuncture comes in the late 1950s and the disastrous 1960s, when Victorian values were largely jettisoned in favour of "I'm-all-right-Jack" materialism.

The crowning irony of the situation, however, is that while Mrs Thatcher has preached Victorian values, she has (as Patrick Middleton points out) presided over a régime which has completed their undermining. Her sentimental attachment to the Victorian values of her girlhood has been almost wholly negated by her ideological commitment to monetarism. This

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[7] *The Worst of Times: An Oral History of the Great Depression*. By NIGEL GRAY. Wildwood House, £11.95.

[8] Stephen Constantine, *Unemployment in Britain Between the Wars* (1980).

[9] *The Worst Street in North London: Campbell Bunk, Islington Between the Wars*. By JERRY WHITE. Routledge, £8.95.

[10] Nicholas Pronay and D. W. Spring (eds), *Propaganda, Politics and Film 1918-45* (1982).

[11] Michael Sissons and Philip French (eds), *The Age of Austerity* (1963), p. 31.

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baleful creed has resulted in the return of the dark and unacceptable face of Victorian Britain.

Thatcherite post-Industrial Britain has become the mirror-image of the early years of Industrialisation when, unrestrained by conscience or regulation, there was an upsurge of materialism, philistinism, snobbery, self-interest, rampant individualism, and social divisiveness. It was against these unpleasant realities of 19th-century life that the great Victorians, the sages and prophets, the statesmen and reformers, the idealists and men of letters, set themselves, castigating, satirising, and seeking to eradicate them. Whether it was Gladstone or Disraeli, Dickens or Shaftesbury, Ruskin or Carlyle, Tennyson or Arnold, General Gordon or General Booth, their theme was (with individual and characteristic variations) a rejection of and an attack upon all those aspects of life to which Thatcherism conduces.

THE INDUSTRIAL devastation of the North, Scotland, and Wales has recreated "the two nations" that Disraeli so detested. The undermining of public services, particularly public transport, has increased social divisiveness. The run-down of the railways, the glory of Victorian Britain, has left whole areas of the country more cut off than at any time since the 18th century. Half the families of Britain have access to a car, but the other half do not and depend crucially on deteriorating transport services.

Another of Victorian Britain's finest achievements was the great programme of municipal improvements, as exemplified by Birmingham, which was transformed into one of the most beautiful cities in Europe in the wake of slum clearance, the provision of street lighting, sewers, and public transport. Such activities led the great Victorian John Bright to declare:

> "I only hope that the corporations generally will become very much more expensive than they have been—not expensive in the sense of wasting money, but that there will be such nobleness and liberality amongst the people of our towns and cities as will lead them to give their corporations power to expend more money on those things which, as public opinion advances, are found to be essential to the health and comfort and improvement of our people."

The metropolitan counties, admirably seeking to put John Bright's philosophy into effect, have been summarily abolished. Meanwhile the sewers and water systems of the 19th century, long overdue for renewal, are rotting away for want of funds to restore them.

The run-down of the education system daily advances the cause of philistinism, as does the Government's underfunding of the arts and scandalous neglect of the great institutions of instruction—museums, libraries, art galleries—which the 19th-century civic élites, animated by religious belief, philanthropic idealism, social responsibility, and civic pride, created to provide a free education for the masses. The introduction of museum admission charges is an eloquent reminder of the extent of the difference between Victorian values and Thatcherite reality.

For many in the depressed areas, hard work, thrift, cleanliness, self-respect, and love of country are difficult to sustain in the face of mounting job losses, declining housing conditions, and deteriorating public services. The result today is the same as it was in the early days of Industrialisation: rising crime, increasing levels of violence, and record levels of drug-taking as today's young seek the way out that their 19th-century counterparts found in laudanum and the gin bottle.

Objection Overruled

By Patrick Middleton

JEFFREY RICHARDS relies on a curiously old-fashioned approach to 19th-century social history (which has advanced a long way since G. M. Young's time). He ignores my initial point that a facile use of the term "Victorian Values", as by Margaret Thatcher and a host of older writers, obscures the fact that many of the values popularly associated with the Victorians were only realised two decades and more after the old Queen's death. It is no argument at all to offer an anthology of contemporary homiletic: what must primarily concern the social historian is the effect this sermonising had on its intended audience.[1] There is massive evidence that, until the very end of the century and beyond, this effect was very limited except within the ranks of the middle class and a small (but, as I said, expanding) "respectable" segment lower down. Exponents of "evangelical" morality were fully aware of their failure and would have agreed, reluctantly, with Lord Randolph Churchill's judgment that "the aristocracy and the working class are united by the indissoluble bonds of a common immorality". Indeed, the very scale and persistence of their exhortatory output underlines its manifest lack of success. That "respectable" values began to be more widely disseminated during the 1890s and thereafter had far more to do, as Charles Booth realised, with the new social discipline of the elementary school than with any sort of religious influence (in both Board and Church schools he noted the same ignorance and indifference with respect to religion). The children of these times were to be the mature adults (and parents) of "Georgian" England.

[1] Adopting the Richards method, one could demonstrate that the Poles are a sober and industrious people. For years they have been bombarded, from both Party platform and Church pulpit, with urgings to drink less and work more. As visitors notice (or are soon told) in the mass they remain indifferent, for a variety of reasons, to these "Jaruzelsko-Glempian values", and are as obstinately drunken and unproductive as ever.

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Nothing in contemporary sources can allow the claim that those working-class Victorians who were conspicuously hard-working and sober and successfully strove after such virtues as cleanliness and thrift were anything like a majority. Take cleanliness: difficulties, in both town and country, with water supply and sanitation, the cost of soap (taxed until mid-century), limited wardrobes (and absence of effective cleaning methods) together with overcrowded living conditions and the polluting character of much manual labour meant that, as J. B. Priestley once remarked, only as the 20th century advanced did the working class cease to be recognisable by its smell. In fact, as the bourgeoisie from early in Victoria's reign increasingly adopted the habit of the daily bath, so body odour became a major *differentia* of class. This was one justification for segregated railway compartments and, although more controversial, seating arrangements in churches. It was fortunate, commented the *Saturday Review* in 1864, that the poor did not attend church in any number since the better-off classes could clearly have not put up with their "stifling vapour"; 40 years later Charles Masterman recognised that an advantage of the use of incense in ritualist churches was that it overlaid the stench emitted by humbler worshippers. Dr Richards's glib allusion to Treitschke misses the literal truth of what he said. When the young Cosmo Lang arrived in Leeds to take up his first curacy he was appalled by the filthy and malodorous men, women and children who inhabited the parish: were these, he wondered in a letter, human beings?

And what of thrift? No one doubts that real wages, for a majority of workers, improved after 1850, and notably during the two decades after 1873, but this must be put in the context of large families (with an average of six surviving children in 1881) living on a single income, and, beyond the ranks of the "respectable", incompetent budgeting. Getting enough to eat was a daily preoccupation and expenditure under other heads, even with careful management, was severely limited. Working-class household inventories at the end of the century show, according to John Burnett, a remarkable similarity with those of Tudor and Stuart times. It was an exceptional family which could "live within its income" and there was an enforced reliance on corner-shop credit. As this ran out or proved inadequate, vast numbers of Victorians were habituated, from childhood on, to scavenging and petty theft. The scale of poverty varied over the family life-cycle but at times its pressures could be revealed in ways inconceivable in "Georgian" Britain. Still, in Booth's time, East-Enders prowled through the sewers, braving rats and gases, in the hope of dredging up coins and other valuables from the city's swirling wastes. Dirt and poverty did not preclude a certain sort of self-respect but this had little relation to what Dr Richards calls "the conventional wisdom".

I DID NOT CLAIM, as Dr Richards implies, that the 1930s were a period of "unmitigated sweetness and light". What is incontestable is that, for the mass of the working class, living standards were higher than before 1914. I quoted Seebohm Rowntree as offering a typical finding for the turn of the century. Whatever may have been the case in York three decades later, other studies confirm that there was an overall change for the better. *The New Study of London*, published in 1934, drew comparisons between existing poverty levels and those found by Booth, and indicated a marked improvement: in Bethnal Green, for example, the proportion in poverty had fallen from 42.2% to 17.8%. Even those with the most limited resources, it should be remembered, could benefit from the often very considerable reduction in the cost of food.[2] For those in work there were new possibilities of consumption made available by easy credit and the growth of mass retailing (Marks & Spencer opened 129 stores between 1931 and 1935).

To bolster his case Dr Richards chooses to rely on the seductive but dangerous tool of oral history. Certainly, living memory of the inter-War years is largely of an era of want. This is scarcely surprising since recollections of that time have been refracted through the later experience of post-"Georgian" affluence and further distorted by an insistent media image of the 1930s, especially, as a period of unrelieved misery and deprivation. This perception, however, falsifies how people saw things at the time. Then living memory was of the grinding poverty which many had known before the First World War (real wages had actually fallen by 20% between 1896 and 1912). Even for the unemployed after 1918, conditions were usually better, and rarely worse, than before. It was thus that so many "Georgians", as Orwell put it, "kept their tempers and settled down to make the best of things on a fish-and-chips standard".[3]

There were at times, as Dr Richards indicates, spurts of panic among the middle class, but these were often artificially inspired for political motives (see, for example, the editorial columns of the *Daily Mail*). However, the collapse of the General Strike—in which, incidentally, only 13% of the labour force were involved, and some of those with reluctance—made it plain how little there was to fear. Within a few years Ernest Bevin was identifying the unions as "the labour side of management". Britain's "little Moscows"—which figure so largely in the affabulations of Marxist writers on the period—were as little representative of the British working class as was, a little later, Dean Hewlett Johnson of the Church of England.

[2] Class differences in nutrition remained, of course, although these can be explained in terms of ignorance as well as poverty. However, after 1918 they were reduced, as the evidence of school medical surveys makes clear. In the 1880s public-school boys were on average five inches taller than their board-school contemporaries; by the late 1930s this difference had been reduced to two inches. Again, in 1939 and after far fewer young men were rejected for military service on the ground of general physical debility than during the First World War.

[3] Even more or less open-minded writers on the period are inclined to describe the welfare system as simply ungenerous and degrading (viewing it, unhistorically, from the perspective of the post-1945 Welfare State). It is clear, however, that transfer payments made an important contribution to alleviating hardship, and, it may be added, to making possible respect for certain "Victorian values". Old people were often given minimal care in the Victorian working-class household. As the family historian Michael Anderson has argued, their situation was changed when, eligible for a state pension, they could make some return for whatever they received.

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Dr Richards assures us, without citing a single name in support, that "most historians would place the beginning of the mass media in the 1890s". The concept of "mass media", to be useful, must imply the more or less simultaneous provision of a common symbolic content to the greater part of a population. This was not the case in the decade of Meliès, Marconi, and the *Daily Mail*, which can be more accurately identified as the high point in the *prehistory* of the mass media. The *Daily Mail*, as is clear from its style, content, and assumed readership profile, was not intended for the average working man on "round about a pound a week". Still, in 1910, only one out of five of British adults read a daily paper; this proportion rose rapidly after the War, reaching around two out of three in 1934. As to cinema, there was a vast difference between the "peep-show" world of pre-War cinema and the highly commercialised medium of the 1920s and '30s: 1,000 purpose-built picture-houses were opened in Britain between 1924 and 1932. Radio, of course, was an entirely post-War phenomenon (the BBC began transmission in 1922), but caught on very rapidly and was the most pervasive of "Georgian" media. In the light of all this, it is scarcely "arbitrary" to place the beginning of the age of mass media in the years after 1918.

Dr Richards wishes us to accept, and in a strong form, the thesis that the "Georgian" media, especially during the 1930s, were manipulated in the interests of "bourgeois hegemony". What is most striking to an unprejudiced observer is how little positive use was made of those media to exercise influence over public opinion. There was, rather, an exclusion of what Reith called "unsavoury subjects", together with an assumption that the existing social order was broadly satisfactory. It is part of the Gramscian theory upon which Dr Richards draws that beneath the surface of a class society there is simmering away a set of alternative working-class ideas which one day will take over the "hegemonic" function: in other words, the ideological expropriators will be in their turn expropriated. There is, however, no evidence that ordinary "Georgians" had any such ideas, nor that they had any desire for radical social change. I find nothing unusual in the Special Branch report which related how, moving along Pall Mall, the Jarrow marchers caught a glimpse of the King in his limousine, and "began cheering lustily". As Dr Richards admits in *The Age of the Dream Palace*, the most successful of British screen stars—Gracie Fields and George Formby—were exponents of consensus; unsurprisingly, *Proletkult* movies like those of John Baxter aroused no popular interest. "Georgian" cultural caution had its origin, as I argued, in the vestiges of the Victorian *grande peur*; with hindsight, it can be seen as scarcely necessary.

This view of the matter can be demonstrated even more clearly in the case of radio. Beatrice Webb reflected on "what a terrible engine of compulsory conformity the wireless might become" and thus echoed Hitler's view of the medium, in *Mein Kampf*, as "a terrible weapon for those who know how to use it". Hitler and Stalin and, in a different way, American advertisers showed quite clearly "how to use it", but the Reithian BBC limited itself, for the most part, simply to watching out, in a broad sense, for "anything approaching vulgarity". Clapham and Dwyer were temporarily taken off the air for saying "damn", and Harold Nicolson for mentioning *Ulysses*, while John Hilton was even in trouble for referring to "char*ladies*" rather than "char*women*"; but the overall tone of the Corporation's output was scarcely that of an active propagandist. Meanwhile, the commercial stations in Europe came closer, it may be supposed, to offering the people what they wanted, thus upsetting the fiercely Sabbatarian Reith,[4] but there was no hint of vulgarity (even less of social dissent) in such innocuous jollities as *The Ovaltineys' Concert Party*. Attitudes to broadcasting were modified during the War, of course, but the underlying indifference to the medium's "hegemonic" potential was made clear by Winston Churchill's approval in 1952 of Alexander Cadogan's appointment as Chairman of the BBC; Cadogan (as Asa Briggs recalls) "had never watched television and seldom listened to radio".

Dr Richards advances the unusual opinion, for a modern social historian, that there was a moral continuity between the 1830s and the 1950s. Such a view would be rejected out of hand by most of the authorities he quotes. Necessarily, he must contest my argument that 1918 marks a significant *terminus ad quo* in moral history, and that only in the succeeding years were "Victorian" values "widely dispersed among the working class".

In his *Now the War is Over* (1985), Paul Addison has summed up the years between 1945 and the Festival of Britain as "a wholesome, healthy, orderly and somewhat repressive society". This description I would extend, with only occasional qualification, to the entire "Georgian" period from 1918 onwards. Margaret Thatcher, one may hazard a guess, would accept it as a working formula for her ideal society.[5]

[4] In this matter Reith, although in most ways "a man of his time", was an extremist, and not only working-class listeners—indeed, in 1938 up to 80% of all Sunday listeners, including many in middle-class housholds—turned to the commercial stations for a little light relief. There is amusing evidence of this in Barbara Pym's *Crampton Hodnet*, published only in 1985, but written in the late 1930s.

[5] The latter part of Dr Richards's comment on my article is a somewhat overheated gloss on my closing paragraph. The advent of commercial television was an especially dramatic example of the tension within British Conservatism between its moral and economic priorities, and, in different contexts, this can be traced deep into its history. Margaret Thatcher, I would agree, embodies this tension in an extreme form. However, it is too simple to lay all our troubles at her door. Finally, Dr Richards's suggestion that Britain today "is a mirror image of the early years of industrialisation" is a piece of rant unworthy of a serious historian.

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LETTERS

Mishan Replies to Milton Friedman

ONE MAN'S CRITIQUE may be another man's diatribe. But I have no clue from Dr Friedman's letter (February) just what I am supposed to be "diatribing" against. I certainly did not propose ("Fact, Faith, & Myth", November) an alternative economic system, much less a Utopia or an "ideal stationary state."

Perhaps if Dr Friedman would forbear from reading between the lines and direct his attention to the lines themselves it may dawn on him that the purpose of the article was to dispel complacency about the power of free markets and liberal democratic institutions in preventing the growth of government—and the concomitant decline of personal freedom—in technically advanced civilisations. Thus, although I make it clear that "working through or with the market" does, in my opinion, confer advantages in both efficiency and choice as compared with centralised planning, I am deeply pessimistic about the future of Western civilisation. Such pessimism is surely compatible with concern for the maintenance of a libertarian society.

Friedman alleges that my reference to his and Mrs Friedman's book, *Free to Choose*, is incorrect inasmuch as on pages 30-32 they "discuss the effects of spillovers in reducing individual choice—something Mishan says that we do not mention."

While it is true that they mention spillovers in these three pages, they do not state explicitly that such spillovers—in addition to government interventions—*also act to reduce individual choice*. The purpose of their brief acknowledgment of the spillover problem is (quite rightly) to warn against hasty recourse to government legislation wherever adverse "third-party effects" can be detected.

In my discussion of spillovers, however, the accent is shifted. For whether these "third-party effects" are "corrected" or not (whether governments intervene or not), spillovers act to reduce individual choice. I argue that the post-War growth of adverse spillovers may be regarded as no less significant a phenomenon in eroding individual choice than the growth of government—to which incidentally it is related. (Systematic treatment of the thesis is in my "The Effect of Externalities on Individual Choice", *International Review of Law and Economics*, 1982.)

Finally, I cannot but marvel at those hypersensitive intellectual antennae that can discover in my paper a clandestine admiration for Albanian Communism; or, for that matter , in *M's* "Column" an insidious nostalgia for "dirigism" (apparently because he deplores, and would like to reduce, some of the ravages perpetrated by the rising tide of mass tourism). If, in Dr Friedman's view, dirigism and Albanian Communism look to be constituents of ENCOUNTER's "new orthodoxy", it would be interesting to know just what he believes was the journal's "old orthodoxy".

E. J. MISHAN

London

Besmirching the Fabians

ONE OF THE perils of directing the work of the Fabian Society is to find oneself constantly defending the good name of the Society against those who would use it as a term of abuse. "Fabian" is used derogatorily by those on the Far Left to besmirch gradualist reformism, while on the Right it epitomises all that is wrong with statism and conformity. Edward Pearce, however, achieves new heights of denigration when he describes P. W. Botha and his Government as "marginal Fabian reformers" ("The Gathering of the Warlords", September-October 1986).

There are, it seems to me, three uniquely Fabian qualities which subsume the many differing strands of thought which have found a home in the Fabian Society during the past 102 years:

1. A belief in collectivism—though with considerable room for disagreement about its locus (state, municipality, union, or cooperative).

2. An acceptance of the importance of ideas and debate, rejecting the view that there is any single received version of the truth and espousing research to determine the facts in any situation.

3. A commitment to change through persuasion, by seeking the widest possible acceptance of ideas through argument and education.

How Mr Botha can be seen as any sort of Fabian beggars belief. His blinkered commitment to the theory of separate development and use of ruthless state power to retain control over the majority are, in many ways, the very antithesis of the Fabian ideal.

JOHN WILLMAN
General Secretary

Fabian Society
London

TV History as Propaganda

On Channel 4's "Greece"—By C. M WOODHOUSE

RICHARD CLOGG ("A Case Study in Bias & Distortion", ENCOUNTER, February) has given a thorough account of the hidden war behind *Greece: The Hidden War*. May I add a comment on what seems to me the most puzzling aspect of the affair?

The Channel 4 programme could fairly be described as the longest "Party Political Broadcast" ever shown on British television. It might have been made expressly for the benefit of the present ruling party of Greece, PASOK. It was produced under the guidance of a Greek historical adviser whose preconceived opinions, if known in advance, would have led to the withdrawal of at least some of the British participants. And it was financed, we are told, entirely from British funds.

There is, of course, no reason why propagandists of any nationality should not be free to present, if they wish, a narrowly partisan view of the British role in Greece in the 1940s, and of the American role subsequently. But it is surely unacceptable that their propaganda should be produced at British expense and thrust on the unsuspecting public under the guise of history. The puzzling thing is that the Independent Broadcasting Authority regards all this with complete indifference.

When complaints were first made about the programme, the IBA requested Channel 4 to conduct an enquiry. The enquiry reached the conclusion, which the IBA endorsed, that although there were one or two errors of judgment, "there was no knowing deception". Any suggestion that this might be untrue was dismissed by the Director-General of the IBA with undisguised contempt.

As the controversy developed, a surprising contrast emerged between the attitudes of the IBA and Channel 4. The IBA, which had no responsibility for producing the programme, became far more reluctant than Channel 4, which bore a heavy responsibility for it, to admit that the programme was a scandal. Thus, the Managing Director of Channel 4 wrote in a letter to *The Guardian* (9 July 1986) that:

"We at Channel 4 failed to deduce from TVS's submission that a pro-

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gramme whose 'backbone' would be the testimony of exiled Greeks now newly available could turn out to entail the virtual exclusion of all other witness. It may suit some to see the debate as one between Greeks and the British establishment. But the civil war was between Greek and Greek. The real reproach to the series, and the real loss to the British viewer, is that in three hours of film for television, not one Greek was interviewed who opposed the Left."

That is a very fair admission, but it did not dispose of a continuing doubt on the wider question of "knowing deception". I repeatedly asked the IBA to address itself to this question, but in vain.

I HAD DECLINED to take part in the Channel 4 enquiry, on the ground that it could not be truly independent because Channel 4 was itself under criticism. But I was quite willing to take part in an investigation by the IBA itself, provided that it covered the wider question of "knowing deception". This was, to my great surprise, most unwelcome to the Director-General of the IBA. The more I pressed for a serious independent investigation, the more his response implied that the complainants were themselves in the dock, the producer was their hapless victim, and he himself was not only judge and jury but also counsel for the production team. The verdict, one was left to feel, was that the complaints were a tissue of lies.

It proved useless to suggest questions to the IBA for independent investigation, because there hardly was any. It seems that the IBA's role in such cases is simply to pass the questions and answers to-and-fro, invariably endorsing the answers, whether relevant or not. In this case, irrelevance was fairly common because awkward questions tended to be misunderstood. But the IBA did not think this mattered.

THE MOST SERIOUS QUESTION concerned the role of the historical adviser to the programme, Dr Yannoulopoulos. We have the assurance of the Director-General of the IBA that his position as historical adviser "was made abundantly clear to all who participated". This was surprising, because none of the former *SOE* officers who participated could remember it. Equally surprising was Dr Yannoulopoulos's revelation, after the series was broadcast, of his personal animosity toward the former *SOE* officers. But the IBA regarded this as quite irrelevant.

Naturally, Dr Yannoulopoulos's motives had to be concealed from us in advance, otherwise we should have refused to take part. But were they also concealed from the producer? This was the first question submitted to the IBA for investigation; but it was never pressed or answered. The reason is not hard to guess. Whether the answer were *Yes* or *No*, the claim that "there was no knowing deception" would collapse.

IT WOULD BE UNPROFITABLE to pursue this sorry story further into detail. But I cannot help feeling that it has lessons for those who may be invited to take part in such programmes in future, and even for the IBA itself. If those who are trapped into propagandist programmes can expect no redress from the statutory authority, then they (and not only they) are likely to be wary of other producers of historical programmes as well. One may, of course, be in trustworthy hands, or one may not; but there is no way of telling until too late. So it is sad to have to give up the notion, in this respect, that the IBA exists to protect the public interest.

C. M. WOODHOUSE

Latimer,
Buckinghamshire

WE NOTE, *with regret and deep sadness, the passing of* ENCOUNTER *contributors and friends in 1986.*

HENRY MOORE
JOHN TREVELYAN
JACK LAMBERT
HELEN GARDNER
JORGE LUIS BORGES
IAIN HAMILTON

HAROLD R. ISAACS
CHRISTOPHER SYKES
H. G. ALEXANDER
J. W. BRUEGEL
AVERELL W. HARRIMAN

BERNARD MALAMUD
JÜRGEN RÜHLE
THEODORE H. WHITE
WALTER BUSSE
COL. J. R. ALFORD
GLYN DANIEL

"Galina" & the Elite

IN YOUR January issue I'm surprised to find a long conversation between a very clever man asking loaded questions (not one showing a trace of any historical sense) of an élitist Russian, apparently hampered by an unconquerable resentment (Galina Vishnevskaya and George Urban, "Galina": A Conversation", ENCOUNTER, December 1986 and January 1987). What is the intention of these articles? To interest us? It's not very interesting even to people like me who admire Vishnevskaya as an artist.

Are we supposed to learn about sin in Russia? Are we supposed to take it that the US-based interviewer belongs to a superior culture? and by what criteria are the Russians to be judged? Perhaps there's the trickery. Perhaps knowing the hidden vanity of intellectuals everywhere you hope indirectly to convey to them: "This is what the top people in cultural circles are thinking: are you one of us?"

I put my complaint simply, for brevity. In sum I'm saying your politics are at best simplistic.

REX GIBSON

Broadway
Worcester

I AM, personally, sorry to see that Mr Gibson should feel that Galina Vishnevskaya's testimony about the Soviet system and Soviet thinking is so uninteresting. Behind the observations I detect a general unhappiness with the fact that we do not accept the *donnée* of Soviet history but go on questioning the morality and legitimacy of Soviet behaviour, whether collective or private. If that is the real meaning of Mr Gibson's complaint, I, at least, plead guilty.

We can, in my humble opinion, never say enough about a system that is responsible for the slaughter of millions of men and women and the enslavement of entire nations including the Russian. One does not have to belong to any élite, or harbour (as he suggests) an "unconquerable resentment" to have compassion for the tortured and the dead, and to want to warn the world about the menace of totalitarianism.

If the Soviet system were a more entertaining topic to study, I'd be happy to develop a more entertaining colloquy about it. Until such time, however, Mr Gibson will have to be satisfied with the record of "real-existing socialism".

Mr Gibson is absolutely right in suggesting that one of the lessons emerging from our conversation is the state of "sin in Russia"—a rather fine and perennial topic, I would have thought, and one the great Russian writers themselves have always been eager to examine and articulate.

I am, incidentally, not "US-based" but write from the edge of the water of this offshore island.

GEORGE URBAN

Hove
Sussex

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Life & Letters Today

Los Angeles

BATON CHARGE: *British musicians are often surprised at the cheeky, light way Americans treat Leonard Bernstein. They say he is a genius of the first order. Americans, on the other hand, tend to see him as a showman, a media celebrity and a hogger of the limelight.*

Bernstein baiting came to a head in Los Angeles, where music critic Martin Bernheimer wrote of a Bernstein concert with the New York Philharmonic:

"The shrugging, jumping, sighing, soaring, gushing, crouching, rocking, rolling, bounding, bobbing, leaping, jiggling, stabbing, hunching, bumping, grinding and grunting maestro in excelsis performed in Los Angeles."

The maestro was performing Tchaikovsky's Pathétique Symphony. Bernstein fired off a letter to Bernheimer's paper saying of the review:

"It gushes, mushes, rants, exhorts, calumniates, fulminates, excoriates, proclaims, declaims, rhetoricises, orates, desecrates and defecates all over the page."

LONDON STANDARD

London

SOFT-SELL: **The news that CND is hiring a top London advertising agency to improve its image and soft-sell unilateral disarmament has got me thinking. I've come up with some of my own slogans [Frank Chapple, ex-Chairman of the Trades Union Congress, writes].**

How about a hoarding showing Neville Chamberlain returning from Munich, waving a CND membership form and saying:

"Disarm now—you know it makes sense."

Or how about a picture of a smiling Polish trade-unionist and a dancing Afghan peasant chorusing:

"We haven't got nuclear weapons and, honest to God, you can always trust the Russians."

DAILY MAIL

London

BLOOMER: *An understanding of James Joyce is not helped by the issue of several new Penguin copies of* **Ulysses**, *his most celebrated work, with the first 19 pages missing. The opening page begins: "He nodded to himself as he drew his trousers off. . . ."*

Penguin were horrified when told of the omission, for they have been vaunting the edition as the version which J.J. himself would have wished to see, the original having been beset by countless errors by a French typesetter with an inadequate knowledge of English.

Joyce would have been tickled pink by the new ambiguities visited upon him by the publishing industry.

THE TIMES

New York City

ALL RIGHT, ALREADY: **After hearing a well-known public speaker use the phrase "OK" 50 times (by actual count), I began to listen for it. Every clerk, waitress, politician, teacher, workman, and even my doctor and dentist and their assistants regaled me with "OK. OK. OK."**

For the next several days I kept count. The highest total was last Friday. I heard "OK" 84 times within eight hours. After that, I gave up counting, convinced that it was the most overused word in the English language.

Why do intelligent people possess such a poverty of vocabulary that they must lean so heavily on this one-word response? Is it addictive like "You know"? How can a language survive if it deteriorates into illiterate garbage? Any theories on this?

NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

Buenos Aires

PSYCHODRAMA: *There is a Plaza Freud café in a section of Buenos Aires called Villa Freud because of the many resident psychologists.*

"Psychology has had an influence here that it has not had in other parts of the world", said Osvaldo Daniel Avelluto, president of the Argentine Psychology Association. "The terms we use, like **neurotic** *and* **hysteric**, *are part of the common language. You hear them used on the streets, in soap operas, and in the movies."*

With the military coup in 1976, the Government turned against the field of psychology. The military authorities closed university departments or imposed limits on their size, and some professionals were persecuted as terrorists.

Since the return to civilian rule several years ago, restrictions on the study of psychology have been lifted.

NEW YORK TIMES

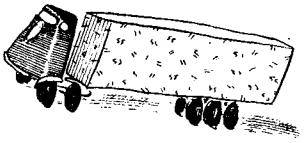
London

ROLLS OF SCRIPTURE: **Every traveller to Eastern Europe knows that household goods are in short supply, but the Rumanian government has devised a particularly mean solution to its lavatory paper crisis. In a blow against religion it has pulped 20,000 imported Bibles.**

How did it come to light? The text of the Bibles had not been completely dissolved in the paper-processing equipment and can still be read on the lavatory rolls.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

Rome



THE CORPSE IS GUILTY: *Anniversaries come and go, and some take on new relevance and get celebrated in surprising ways. On 29 July 1900, or 87 years ago, in Monza, near Milan, the Italian King Umberto I was murdered. The assassin was an anarchist named Gaetano Bresci.*

Now the town of Carrara, famed for its marble and its revolutionary traditions, has decided to commemorate the occasion. Not with a statue of King Umberto—but of Gaetano Bresci! After all he was a "liberator" and had "struck a blow against tyranny". In the local Tuscany council the votes for the new monument came from Socialists, Republicans and one "green" Ecologist. The Christian Democrats voted against. The Communist Mayor and the other members of the CPI abstained from the vote, but nevertheless went ahead to engage a local sculptor and the so-called "Pro-Bresci" Committee ordered 35 tons of local marble.

Meanwhile, the descendants of the murdered King, members of the House of Savoy, are indignant, the Monarchist movement outraged.

Back in Milan, arrangements were made for a memorial service in the Monza cathedral, but the church walls were smeared with political graffiti. A bomb also exploded.

FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG

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MODES · OF · CRITICISM

Renaissance Revivals

City Comedy and Revenge Tragedy in the London Theatre, 1576–1980

WENDY GRISWOLD

Griswold uses the London theatre to exemplify the ongoing interaction between society and its cultural products. Each cultural object, she argues, is created from existing cultural genres and conventions. Each "new play," therefore, is in part renaissance and each "revival" in part a new cultural object. Illus.

Modes of Production of Victorian Novels

N.N. FELTES

Feltes demonstrates the determining influence of nineteenth-century publishing practices on the Victorian novel. "In a critical climate entranced by 'textuality,' Professor Feltes's steady materialism and wealth of historical knowledge serve to recall us to the repressed truth that books are material products, and their authors servants of social power." —Terry Eagleton

The Converse of the Pen

Acts of Intimacy in the Eighteenth-Century Familiar Letter

BRUCE REDFORD

Examining six virtuosi of the "talking letter" — Lady Mary Worsley Montagu, William Cowper, Thomas Gray, James Boswell, Horace Walpole, and Samuel Johnson — Redford, for the first time, gives due importance to the eighteenth-century familiar letter as a literary form in its own right. Illus.

Atlantic Double-Cross

American Literature and British Influence in the Age of Emerson

ROBERT WEISBUCH

"An original and important study of precisely how and to what extent the major American writers of the age of Emerson were able to evade and transmute the influence upon them of British literature." —Harold Bloom

The Politics of Mirth

Jonson, Herrick, Milton, Marvell, and the Defense of Old Holiday Pastimes

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